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MY HEAVENLY HOCKEY CLUB 3

AI MORINAGA

Ballantine Books

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My Heavenly Hockey Club

3

Ai Morinaga

Translated and adapted by Athena and Alethea Nibley

Lettered by North Market Street Graphics

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This is my friend's pet cat that I take care of from time to time, Aya-chan (female). She's freeloading off of me, but she has a bigger attitude than my cat, so I'm revealing to the entire country an embarrassing picture of her being cornered after having stolen some food. Aahh, I feel better.

Honorifics Explained

Throughout the Del Rey Manga books, you will find Japanese honorifics left intact in the translations. For those not familiar with how the Japanese use honorifics and, more important, how they differ from American honorifics, we present this brief overview.

Politeness has always been a critical facet of Japanese culture. Ever since the feudal era, when Japan was a highly stratified society, use of honorifics—which can be defined as polite speech that indicates relationship or status—has played an essential role in the Japanese language. When addressing someone in Japanese, an honorific usually takes the form of a suffix attached to one's name (example: "Asuna-san"), is used as a title at the end of one's name, or appears in place of the name itself (example: "Negi-sensei," or simply "Sensei!").

Honorifics can be expressions of respect or endearment. In the context of manga and anime, honorifics give insight into the nature of the relationship between characters. Many English translations leave out these important honorifics and therefore distort the feel of the original Japanese. Because Japanese honorifics contain nuances that English honorifics lack, it is our policy at Del Rey not to translate them. Here, instead, is a guide to some of the honorifics you may encounter in Del Rey Manga.

-san: This is the most common honorific and is equivalent to Mr., Miss, Ms., or Mrs. It is the all-purpose honorific and can be used in any situation where politeness is required.

-sama: This is one level higher than "-san" and is used to confer great respect.

-dono: This comes from the word "tono," which means "lord." It is an even higher level than "-sama" and confers utmost respect.

-kun: This suffix is used at the end of boys' names to express familiarity or endearment. It is also sometimes used by men among friends, or when addressing someone younger or of a lower station.

-chan: This is used to express endearment, mostly toward girls. It is also used for little boys, pets, and even among lovers. It gives a sense of childish cuteness.

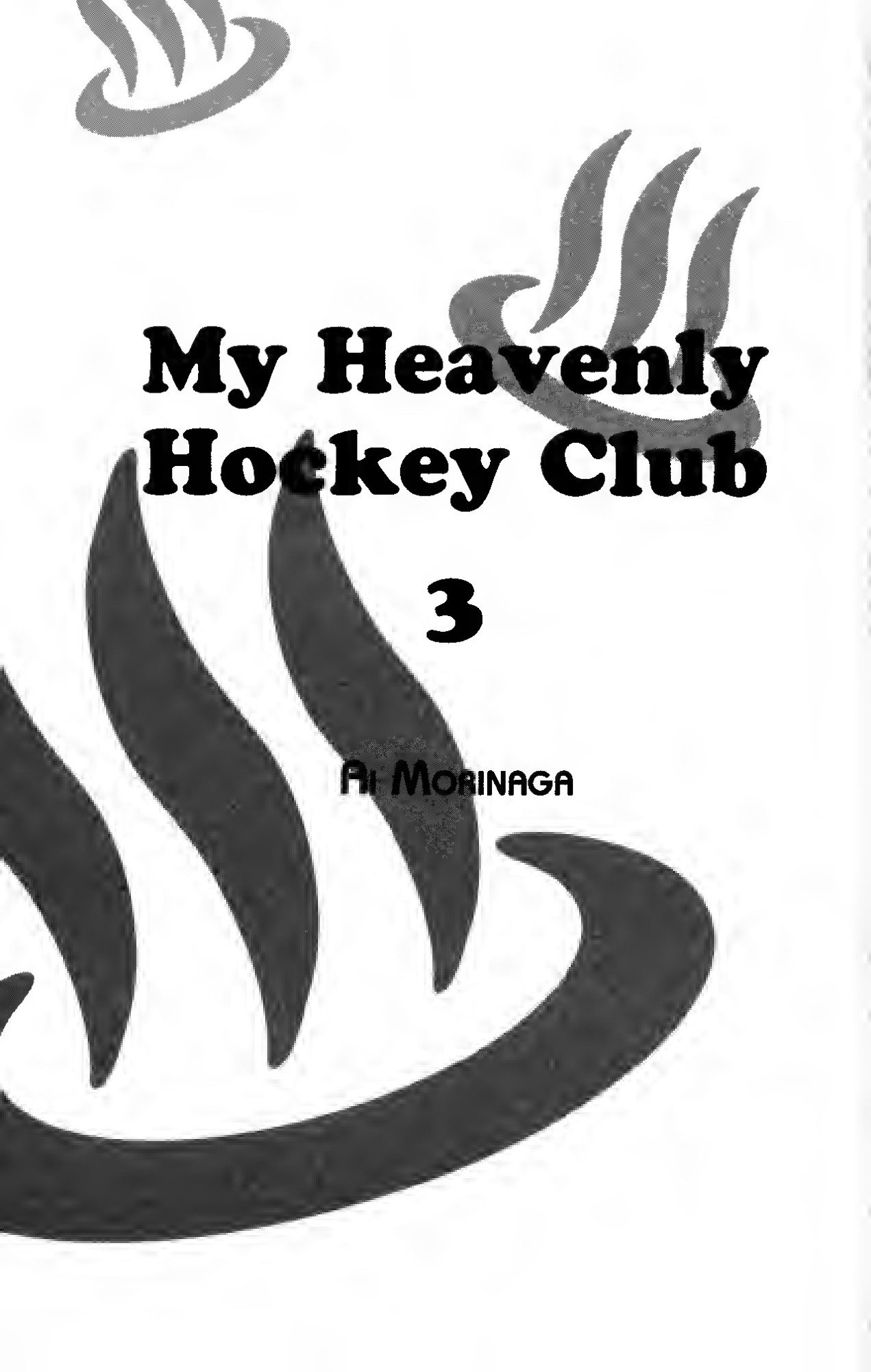
Bozu: This is an informal way to refer to a boy, similar to the English terms "kid" and "squirt."

Sempai/Senpai: This title suggests that the addressee is one's senior in a group or organization. It is most often used in a school setting, where underclassmen refer to their upperclassmen as "sempai." It can also be used in the workplace, such as when a newer employee addresses an employee who has seniority in the company.

Kohai: This is the opposite of "sempai" and is used toward underclassmen in school or newcomers in the workplace. It connotes that the addressee is of a lower station.

Sensei: Literally meaning "one who has come before," this title is used for teachers, doctors, or masters of any profession or art.

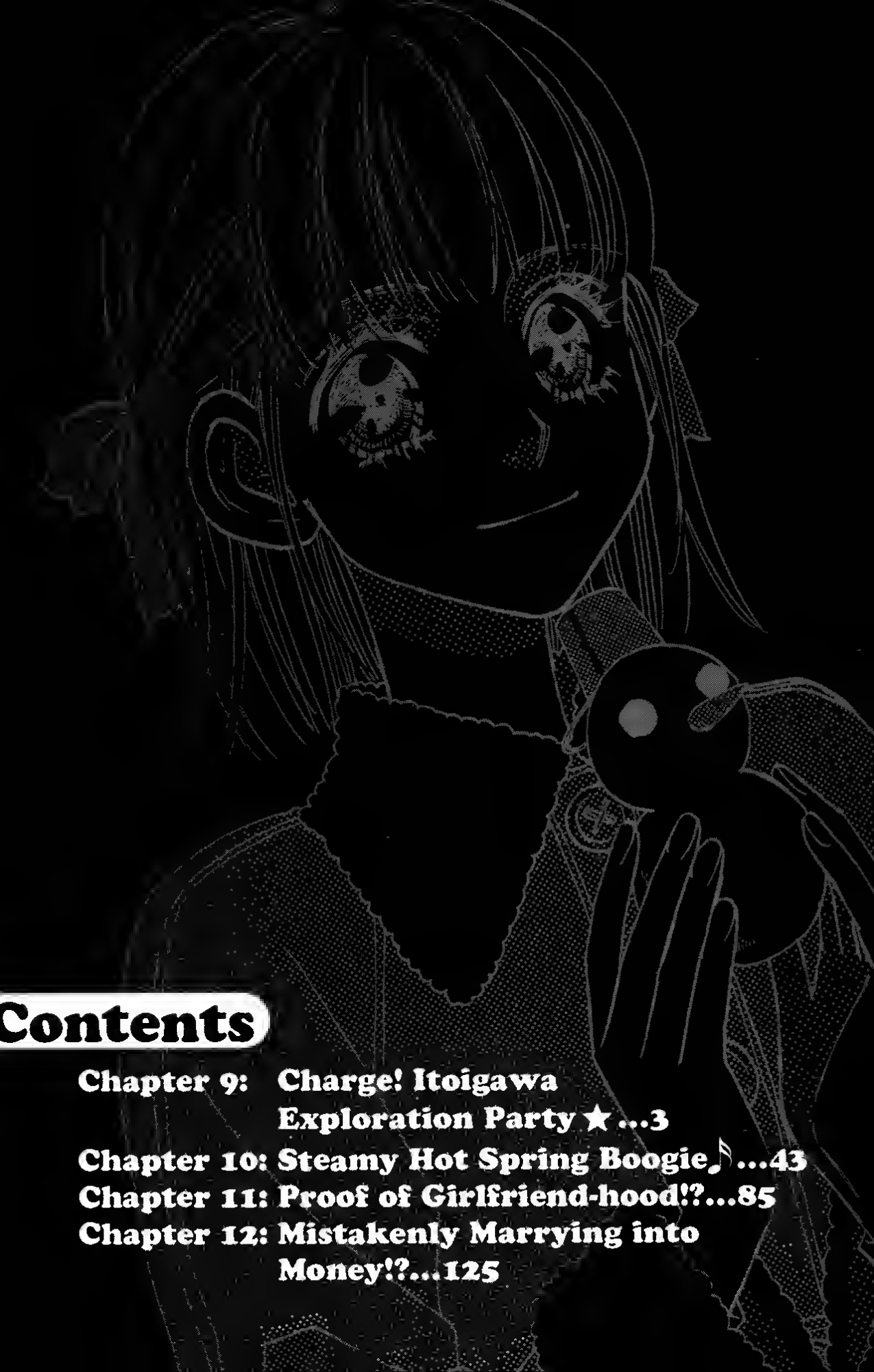
-[blank]: This is usually forgotten in these lists, but it is perhaps the most significant difference between Japanese and English. The lack of honorific means that the speaker has permission to address the person in a very intimate way. Usually, only family, spouses, or very close friends have this kind of permission. Known as yobisute, it can be gratifying when someone who has earned the intimacy starts to call one by one's name without an honorific. But when that intimacy hasn't been earned, it can be very insulting.



My Heavenly Hockey Club

3

Ai Morinaga



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Chapter 9: Charge! Itoigawa Exploration Party☆

じゅう
SIZZLE
じゅう
SIZZLE
Punishment
See volume 2
Okay, Hana-chan. The meat's done!
Yay ♡
Ishigaki beef!
It's not fair!
Hana's the one who crossed the line!

GATAN
ガタ
...Hey.
...Thanks.
Come on, Izumi. If you just sit there, you won't get any meat.
MUNCH
MUNCH
Ack!
Did something happen last night?
BLUSH
かおお
N...not really.
Nothing happened.

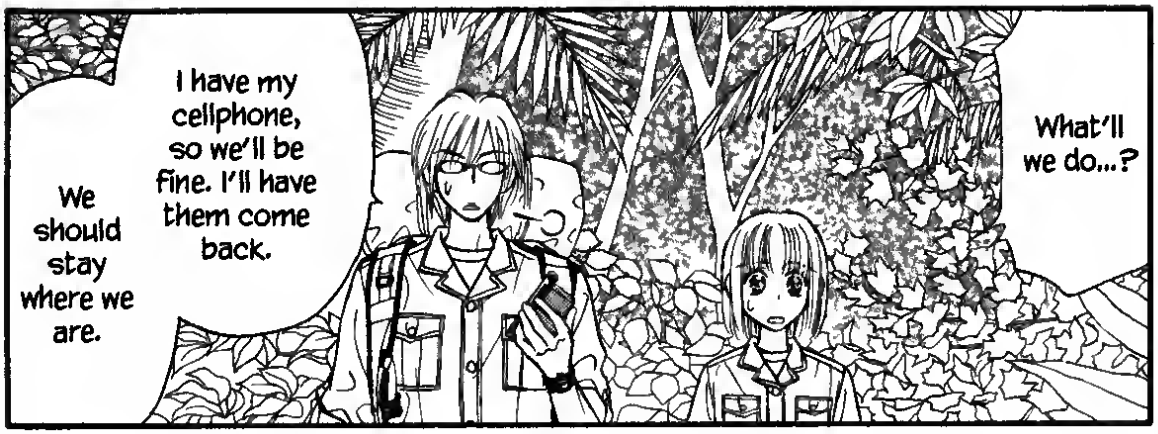
Meow
I found an Iriomote wildcat!
Izu...
Aahh—
Um, this isn't an Iriomote.
I did see a "Beware of Wildcats" sign.
I sure would like to see a real-life Iriomote wildcat...
According to my rules, all cats in Okinawa are Iriomote wildcats.
LICK
LICK
ぎく
GULP

GYAA
GYAA
Ch ch ch!
He's serious!!?
Meow!
Here's some food!
Don't worry! We've got all we need to camp out!
And what happened to hockey club training camp...?
WHEEZE GASP!
Are...aren't Iriomote wildcats nocturnal?

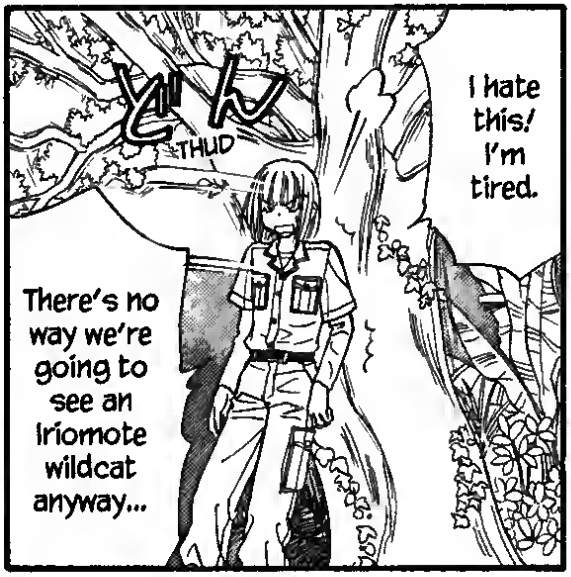
Sheesh, you're hopeless.
STAGGER
Camp...!!?
Uh...
Here, your back-pack.
Give it to me; I'll carry it.
Then he wouldn't be able to go out explor-ing the jungle.
If I'd known this would happen, I would have punished him so hard he couldn't stand.
But I only came here to take naps in a hammock...
Take care of her, Takashi.
You're not carrying anything, so don't slow us down.
MUTTER MUTTER
Tch...
.....

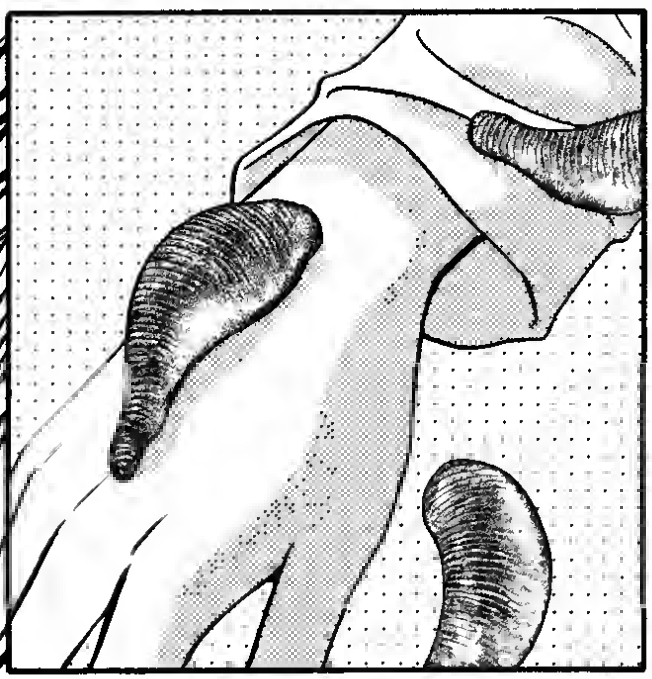
Hey, Suzuki.
What is it?
GASP
WHEEZE
During the typhoon.
Did something happen with you and Izumi?
Huh? Not really...
Why don't you just ask Izumi-sempai?
Izumi won't tell me anything when I ask him; that's why I'm asking you.
...Well, he would be too embarrassed to say he mistook a gecko for a ghost, got scared, and came crying to me.
I feel a little sorry for him, so I guess I won't say anything.
Heh heh.
I'm telling you nothing happened. Really ♡
Don't lie!
...pfft.

H-huh? Where are Izumi-sempai and the others?
Eh?
Huh?
Where is everyone!?
No way!
This is bad.
I guess we've gotten separated.
ZAAAAHH
How pretty.
Meow meow!
Meow!


What'll we do...?
I have my cellphone, so we'll be fine. I'll have them come back.
We should stay where we are.

BARA
BARA
BARA


THUD
I hate this! I'm tired.
There's no way we're going to see an Iriomote wildcat anyway...

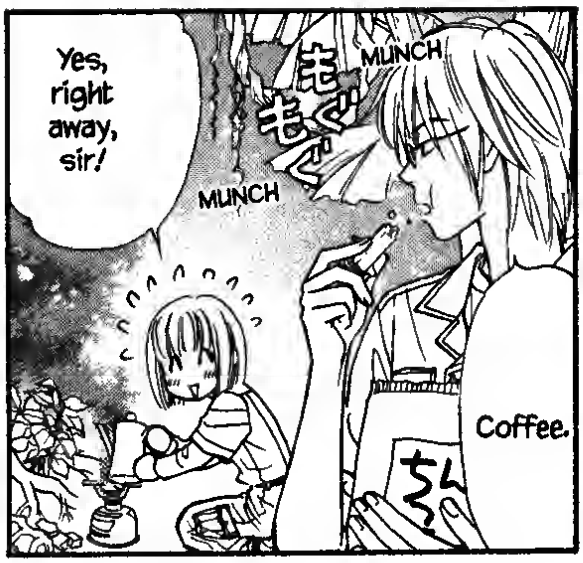


Ah! Hey! Suzuki!?
DAH
I thought I told you to stay here!!
NOOOOOOO!!
ZOOOOOM
Takashi?
Did you just say some-thing...?

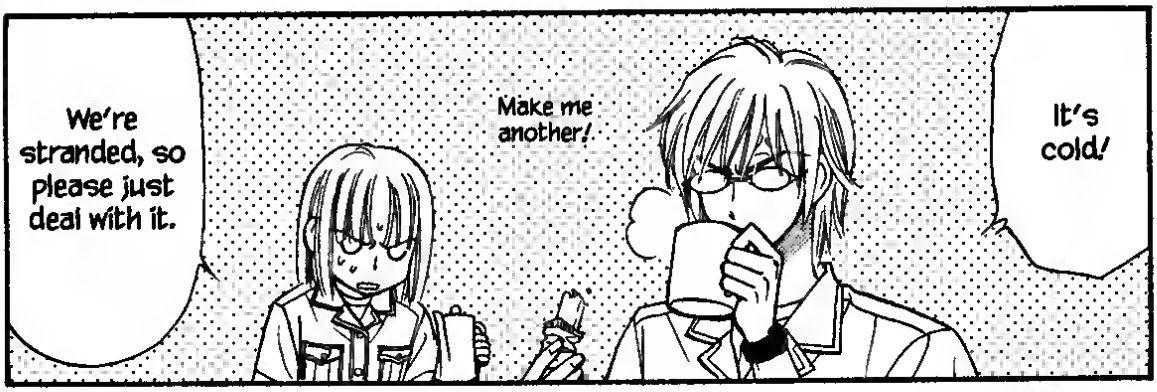
Ta...
Takashi?
Hana!?
Haa
Haa

You stupid idiot.
Where are we...?
Now we're completely lost! What are you gonna do about it!?
I-It's all right. We have your cellphone!
A cellphone that even gets reception in the jungle via satellite!
Cell-phone...
Eh?
.....

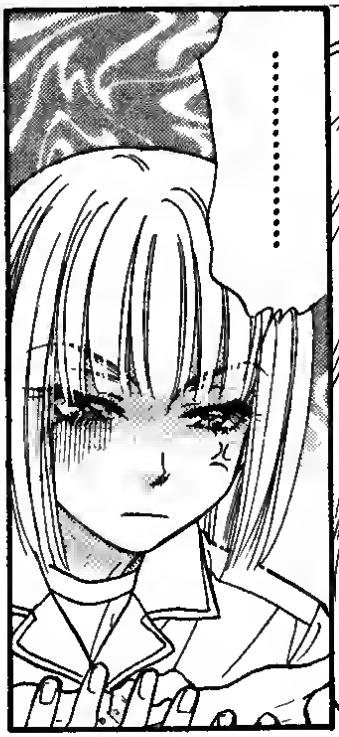
Itoigawa-sempai, you idiot!
Where did you drop it!?
CLAMP
And you lost sight of everyone!
When you were told to take care of me!
MUKA
Full load.
Ugh!
You've got guts saying that, when you're carrying nothing.
I have to be careful not to be bitten by strange bugs and get sick.
Aaahh!
SHUUUU
Waaaaahn!


Yes, right away, sir!
MUNCH
もぐ
MUNCH
Coffee.

I'm hungry. Maybe I'll have some snacks.
ぐぅぅ
GRUMBLE
GRUMBLE
BARI
ばり
Chinsukô


We're stranded, so please just deal with it.
Make me another!
It's cold!

Is there a problem?
Why are you looking at it like that?

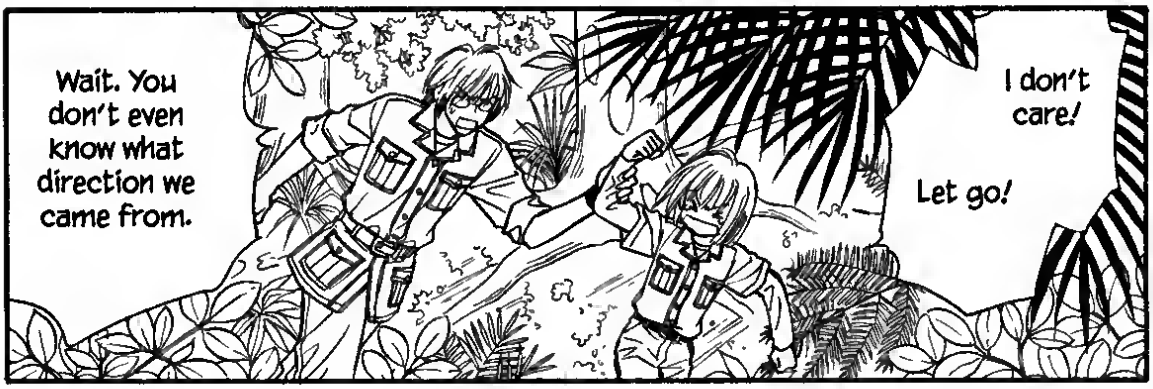

……

Well, fine.
Here, eat.
½ chinsukô

What should I do to him when we get back...!!?
Kill...!
BAK!
No problem, no problem!
If you don't like it, you don't have to eat it.
Of course there's no problem!!
Aaaahh!
SWIPE
Itoigawa-sempai, I have to go to the bathroom.
PFFFFFFF!
Uh...
Please give me some tissue.
Is she really a girl?
You don't have to announce it. Just go over there somewhere.

むっ
ERGH
What will you do if my delicate skin gets a rash?
Nothing doing.
Use some leaves or something over there instead.
SNAP
Delicate skin? Don't you mean barricade of skin?
アッ
OW!
Whose dad are you!!!?

Here I am being so humble; what's his problem!?
Never mind!
I'll find the cellphone myself and get them to come get us!
Ah! Hey!
Don't go off on your own! What if you get even more lost?
Oww...


Wait. You don't even know what direction we came from.
I don't care!
Let go!

Eh?
Eh?
GAH

SPLAAAASH
ぼちゃーん

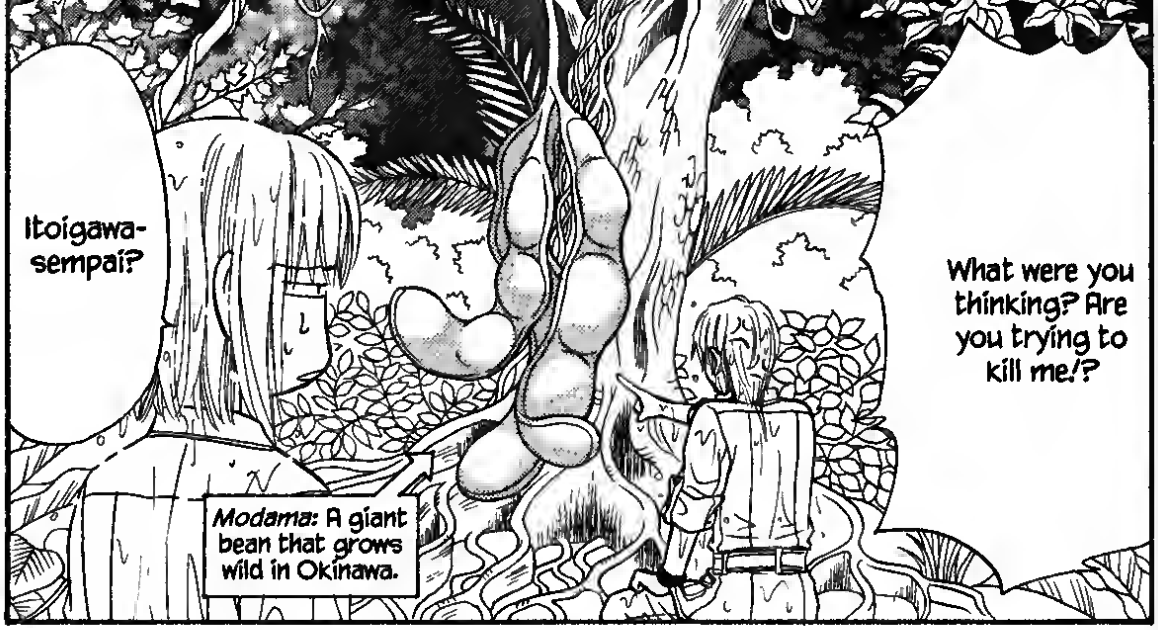
SPLASH
ごぼごぼ
BUBBLE
がぼぼぼぼ
BUBBLE
はっ
GASP

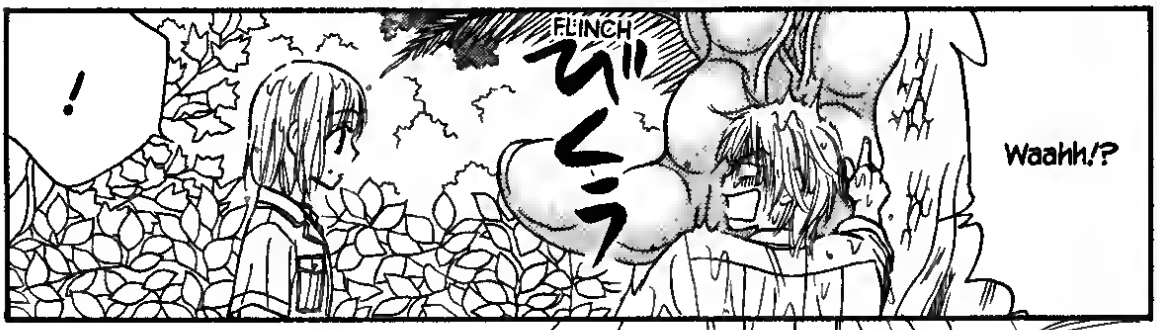
Waahh!
PLUNK

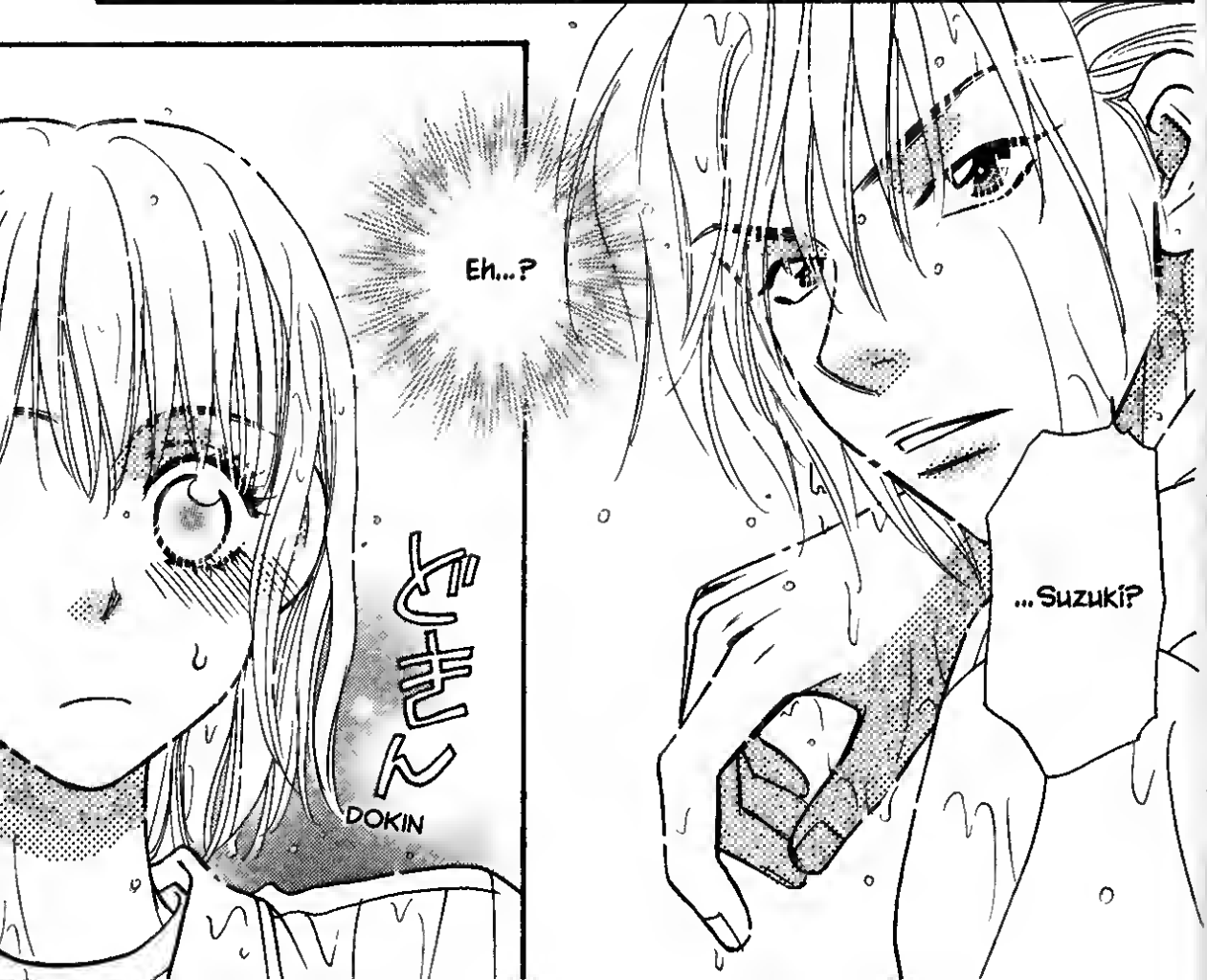
GYAAAHHH!

I-I'm gonna die...!
Somebody...
If I'd known this would happen, I wouldn't have dieted.
Fat floats in water. I'm so stupid...!
SPLASH
BUBBLE
BUBBLE
H-Hey! Don't cling to me like that!
Makes it harder to swim...!
GEBOOHHH

My glasses..!
Ah
!
SPLASH ばしゃん
GASP ぜー
...Suzuki.
You...
WHEEZE ぜー
COUGH げほっ


Itoigawa-sempai?
What were you thinking? Are you trying to kill me!?
Modama: A giant bean that grows wild in Okinawa.


!
FLINCH
びくう
Waahh!?


Eh...?
どきん
DOKIN
...Suzuki?

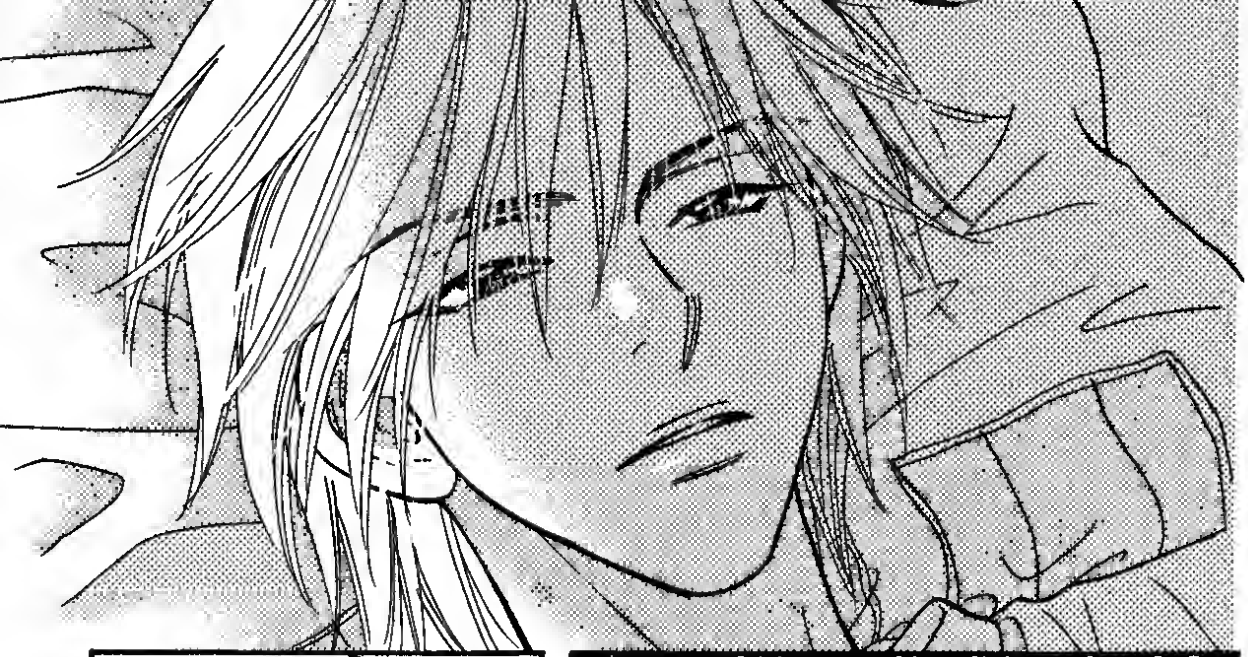
Hey, Suzuki?
GASP
...So this is what Itoigawa-sempai's face looks like...
STARE
Oh. You're over here.
Uh...
I thought you'd hit your head or something...
C-Could it be you can't see?
TWITCH
WHAM
I'm fine!
I don't need to see everything...
STAND''

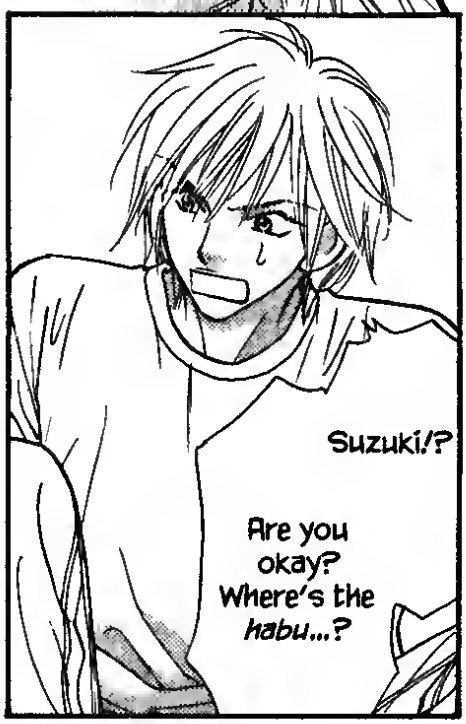
Aaaaaugh!
.....
Ooohh~~
Eehh!?
START
Ah! A habu!
Wh-Where!?
Hey, Suzuki...!?
It's okay. It's gone now.
Aahh, I feel so much better♡

There's no helping it. I guess I'll make a fire to dry our clothes.
...Good idea.
He's feeling around...
Really? Is it okay for me to move now, Suzuki?
He's not doing that on purpose, is he?
Kind of ticks me off...
I—
Itoigawa-sempai, that's...!
Eh?
I've never looked Itoigawa-sempai squarely in the face before,
but he has a really pretty face.
And he's a *guy*. Makes me sick...
...but

HISSSS
S-Stay back, Suzuki!
Habu, habu, habu!
L-Let go, Itoigawa-sempai!
FLOP
FLOP
FLOP
Itoigawa-sempai...!
Just stay back!!
Gyaaaahh!
It's wrapped around me!
It's dangerous. Get away!
B-But...!

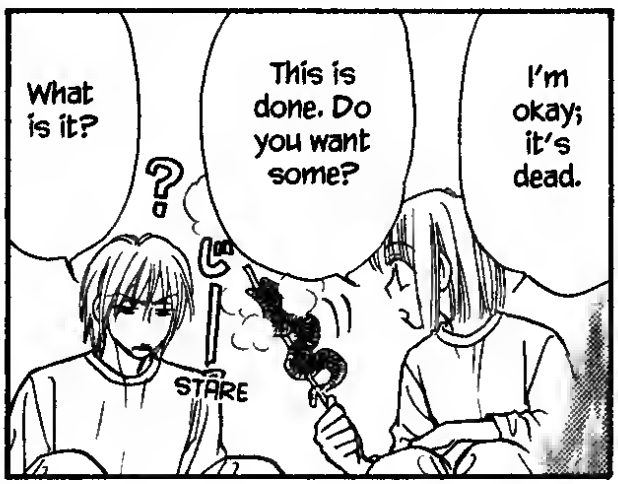
ぱたり
PATARI
WHAP
FAINT
I-Itoigawa-sempai!!!
ぱち
CRACKLE
じゅ
SIZZLE
ぱち
CRACKLE




Suzuki!?
Are you okay? Where's the *habu*...?

Ah.
You're awake.
GABAH!

PFFFFFT
The *habu*.
I tried cooking it ♡


What is it?
This is done. Do you want some?
I'm okay; it's dead.
STARE

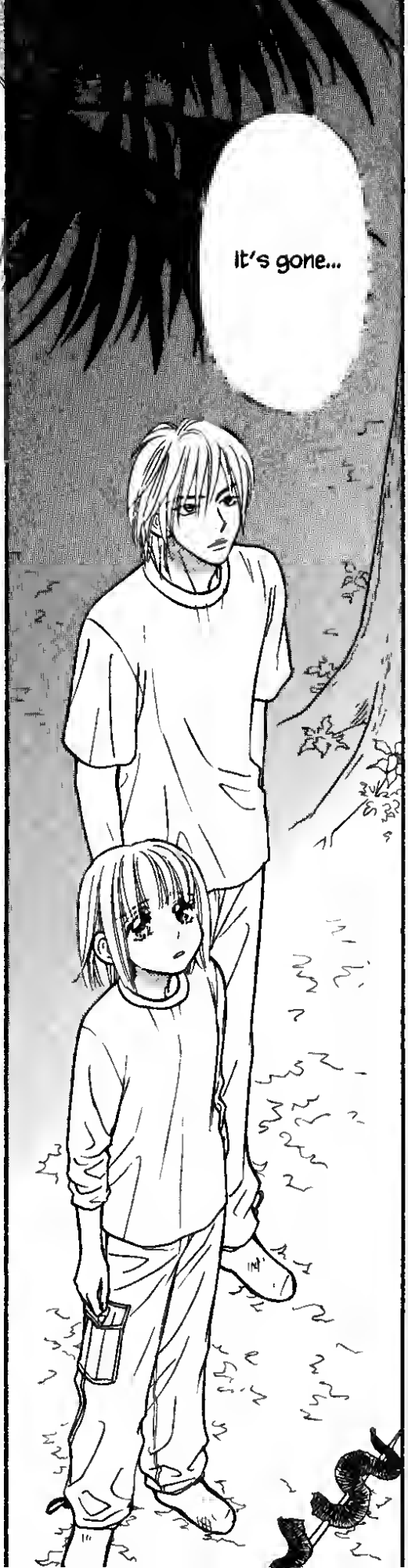
.....
GAKUUUU
It might taste pretty good.
It's okay, it's okay. It's perfectly edible.
It was stupid of me to worry...
PUFF PUFF
BLUSH
Oh, I'm not that tough.
You're pretty tough.
.....
it throws me off to have Itoigawa-sempai being so humble...
...Somehow
...She took that as a compliment?

Thank you for protecting me earlier.
From the habu...
Um...
It was nothing...
.....

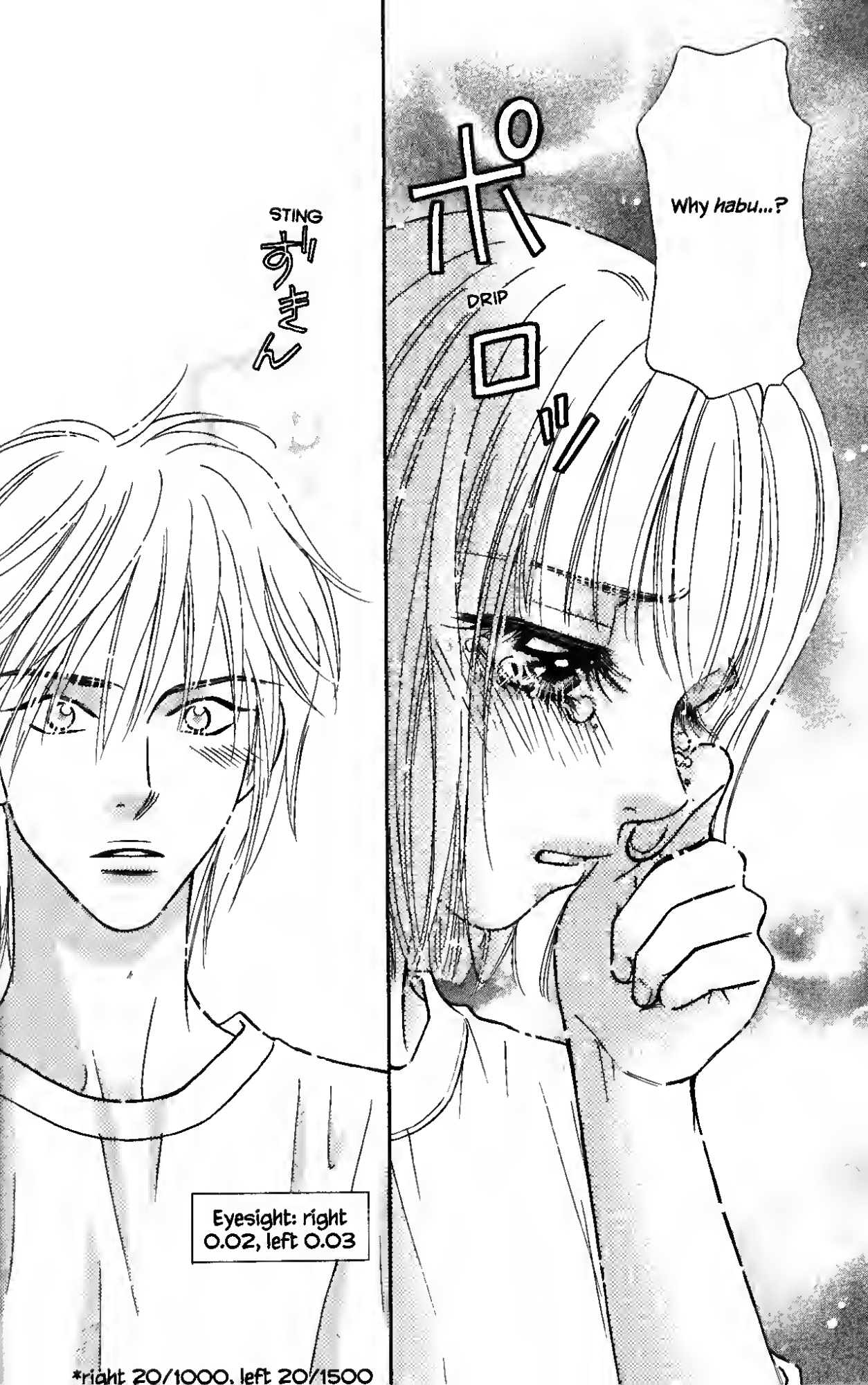
Oh!
The sky!
Eh?
It really is pretty, isn't it? I've never seen such a starry sky before!
Oh...
I say, but you can't see it, can you, Itoigawa-sempai?
Such a shame...
Sheesh.
...I wonder if Izumi-sempai and the others are worried about us...
Yeah...

Sounds like a helicopter...!
BARA
BARA
BARA
But the sun's already set.
It must be Izumi.
Izumi-sempai came to get us...!
Izumi-sempai, down here!
Izumi!

Izumi-sempai...!
It's leaving.
No way!
Why!?
Then drop me off here!!
I'm sorry. We're out of fuel, so for now...
Izumi, calm down!
Just go back!
Um, Izumi?
Go back!
Eh?
Back there!


it's gone...

...If Izumi-sempai hadn't gone off about Iriomote wildcats,
I would be in the summer home, eating *rafte* or *goya champurû* about now.


STING
すきん
ポ
DRIP
Why habu...?
Eyesight: right 0.02, left 0.03
*right 20/1000, left 20/1500

Suzuki...

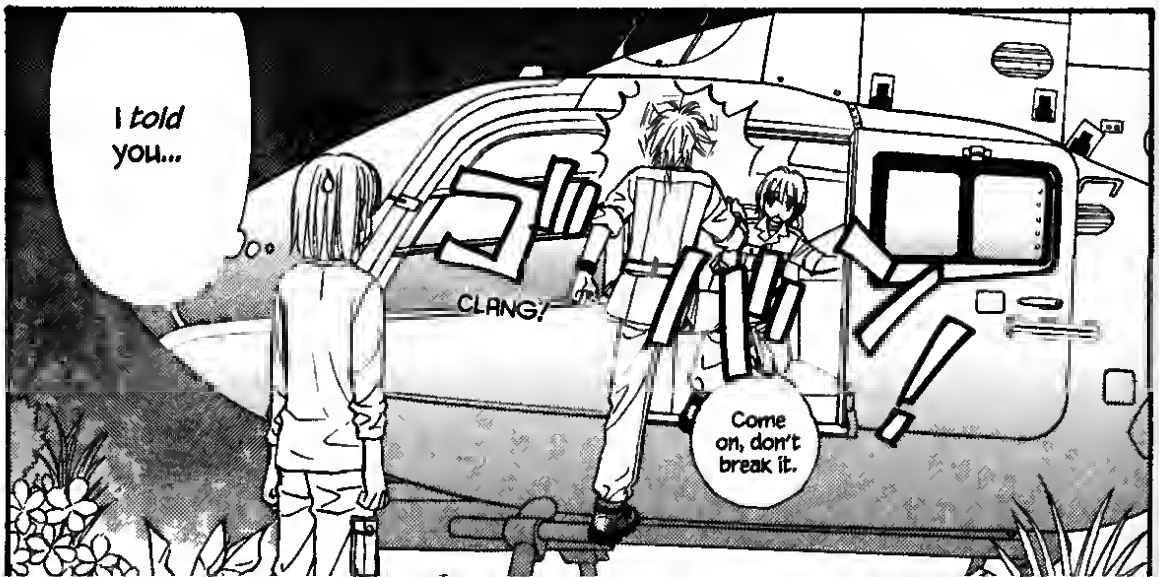
Ow
ow
ow
ow
.....?!
~~~~!!
Iz...!
Izumi-sempai!?
Izumi...!?
That voice...

KERPLOP
~~~~

Hana!
Takashi...!?
Waaahh! We're saved!
I found you!
I thought we were gonna die!
Really! You were the rear guard! You have to be more with it!
I'm sorry. I got distracted.
What were you two doing? I was so worried!

MUKA
むかっ
Shut up! How dare you talk to me like that when I came here to help you!?
Anyway, this is all because you had to see an Iriomote wildcat, Izumi-sempai!
I fell from the helicopter and after that, I fell off a cliff!
ガビーン
GYAA
ガビーン
GYAA
.....
WHAT!?
You almost killed Itoigawa-sempai!
Please use more usual methods to look for us!
MIGYAAAAHH
ガビーン
Natsuki-sempai!
Are both of you okay!? You're not hurt?
I have to get new glasses, fast...
So that Hana Suzuki until now really was my imagination.

Ah.
Itoigawa-sempai, are you okay?
You have to be careful where you step.
I thought I told you I'm fine.


I *told* you...
CLANG!
Come on, don't break it.

No.
I just kind of feel like...
Itoigawa-sempai? Is something wrong?
Yup.
See, I knew it.
.....
Oh, hey, did you get to see an Iriomote wildcat?
Ah ha ha. No way!
we've been forgetting something...
Meow.
So cruel...!

The End

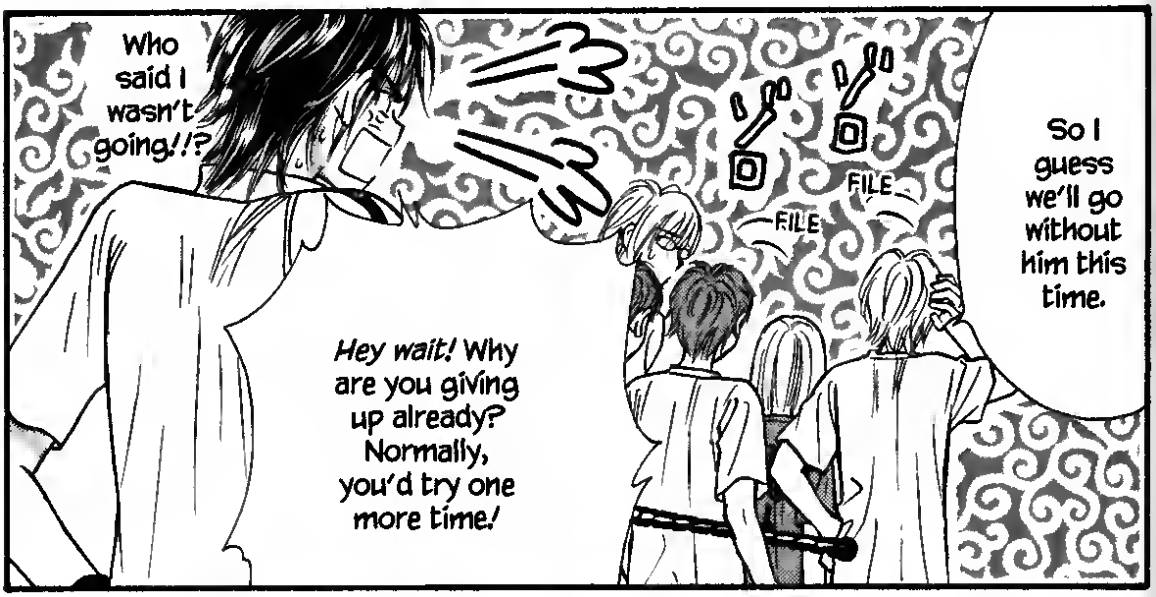
Chapter 10: Steamy Hot Spring Boogie♪

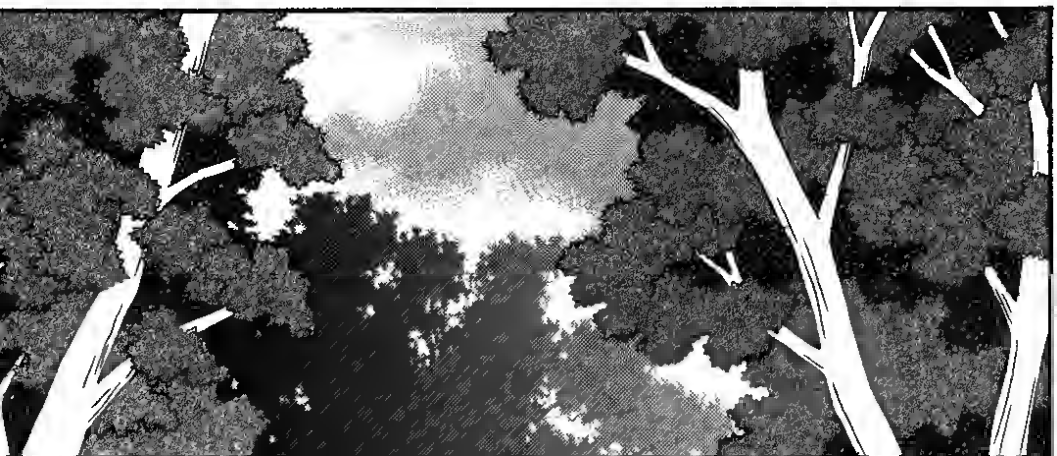
KAN
I'm sorry, Izumi. I just got careless.
GOHN
We're really sorry! We feel terrible.
We're together for the club every day, so please cheer up already.
Here I thought I could sleep all day when we got back from Okinawa...
MUTTER
MUTTER
Sheesh, they're right. He's ruining our summer vacation.
What are you talking about?
Aahh, that was fun, going to Okinawa.
I even got to see an Iriomote wildcat.
It was so much fun, I thought I might spend the rest of my life with the wildcats.

Hey, look! We found a nice, rustic hot springs inn!
Let's all go there and relax!
Yama-no-Oku Inn
A trip to entertain Izumi-sempai!!
Why don't you go without me?
You wouldn't notice if I wasn't there, anyway.
KAAAAN
Eeehhh?
Hey, Suzuki. You say something, too!
We said we're sorry!
Of course we'd notice.
"I'd sure love to go with Izumi-sempai."
"It'd be no fun without Izumi-sempai."
I'd sure love to go with Izumi-sempai.
It'd be no fun without Izumi-sempai.

...You're right. Izumi says he doesn't want to go.
We don't have to go out of our way to invite him if he doesn't want to come!
Aaargh, this is annoying.
For a guy, he's awfully stubborn and whiny.

MUKA
What's with that monotone reading!!?
You're not sincere!


Who said I wasn't going!!?
Hey wait! Why are you giving up already? Normally, you'd try one more time!
FILE
FILE
So I guess we'll go without him this time.



Yoohi Bon
Hey, guys.
Stick close to me so you don't get lost!
...Who was saying, "Why don't you go without me"?
Ch ch ch.
We're kind of doing the same thing we did in Okinawa...
There! Is that it?
I'll carry your bag, Hana-chan.
And he's the one that wanted to come the most. He's really so pretentious.
Hot Springs

...I don't know if it's rustic or just rusted through...
How did they get the picture to look like this...?
Yama-no-Oku Inn
A peaceful spot, surrounded by nature.
Hello—
It's totally a scam!
Will we be okay here?
Dunno...
We'd better report them to JARO.
For now, let's check it out.

Welcome~~
Ghost!!

L-Let's go home, Izumi-sempai!
Come, now. Soak your feet.
Ah... No...
You scared us...
They're human.
Humans.
What ghost?
Awawawawah
Whoa!
CRACK
TWITCH
TRIP
Waaaaahhh!
Izumi-sempai...!
Well, this can be nice once in a while, too, don't you think?
WOBBLE WOBBLE
THUD

SILENCE
THUNK
Let go!
I said, let go, old hag!
Sadako would never let go, even in death!
Good luck, Grandma!
I'm leaving!
We're staying somewhere else, guys!!
It's been so long since we've had guests! We won't let you go~~!
SNAP

I-I'm sorry...
Young people these days...!!
How dare you treat such a helpless old woman so roughly...!
Helpless...?
Eh?
M-My back...!
Oh no! It's her bad back.
Um, should we take you to the hospital...?
I hate hospitals.
If I get some rest, I'll heal soon enough.
This isn't much, but...
To pay for treatment...
It ain't a question of money!
BABAH!
Grandma...!
It's rare for us to have two sets of guests in one day, and here I am, like this ...

—Ugh, why do I have to do this menial work...?
You over there, stop muttering and get to work!
Ah.
KAPOW
Wh-Wh-Wh-What are you doing? Are you trying to kill me!?
Sorry.
I knew it...
It's my first time, so I'm still getting the hang of it.
You can't even chop wood properly?
This is why I hate city boys...
MUTTER
MUTTER
This time!
Uryah!
KONK
Ah.

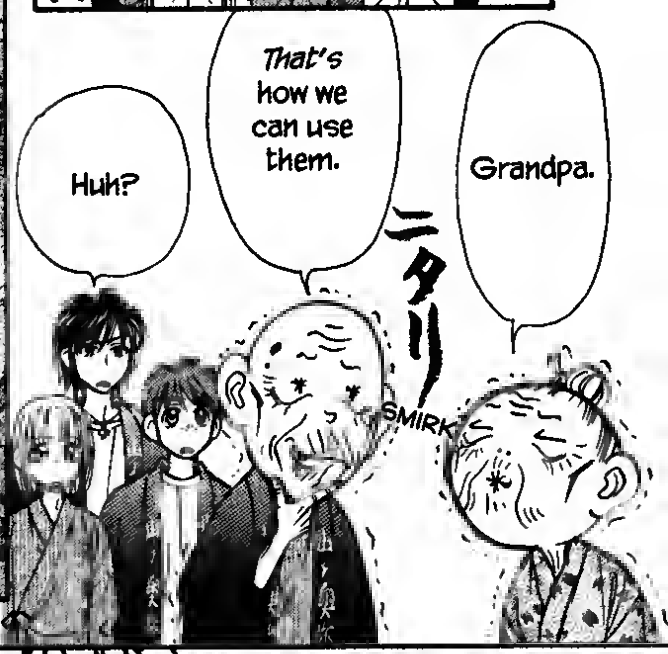
Yeah, leave it to me.
Forget about the wood. Come here and reinforce this!
Aahh! The pillar...!!
Aww.
WOBBLE
WOBBLE
WOBBLE
This is harder than you'd think.
Maybe you're putting too much strength into it?
JIYOOOHH
Let me try!
WOBBLE
SNAP
KOONK
Huh?
DONGARAGASHAAN
GARA
GARA
Taro.
GASHAAAN
Was crushed
Good grief.
I didn't think you were this useless.
What on earth was your upbringing like?
I seriously thought I was going to die.

Are you trying to destroy me!?
The cost of repairing the woodcutting area, the cost of the tableware, the cost of the foodstuff, etc., etc.
No, we have absolutely no such intention.
Let's just let them go now.
I can manage moving now...
Grandma...
Eeehh!? No way!
This is really it!?
It looks nothing like the picture.
Excuse us—
Yes?

Oh...
I'm Yamamoto. I have a reservation...
Ah... Um...
DOKI
Gah!
GUKYO
Don't answer with "Oh"!
Welcome!!
Excuse him. He only just started here, so he doesn't quite know how to deal with guests.
N-No, thanks.
Now, now. Let me take your bags.
Welcome!
Izumi!
You okay!?
Um... We don't mind at all.
Please don't be mad at him.

Ee
We'll literally...
hee
Have them pay with their bodies.
hee

STARE
STARE
STARE
STARE

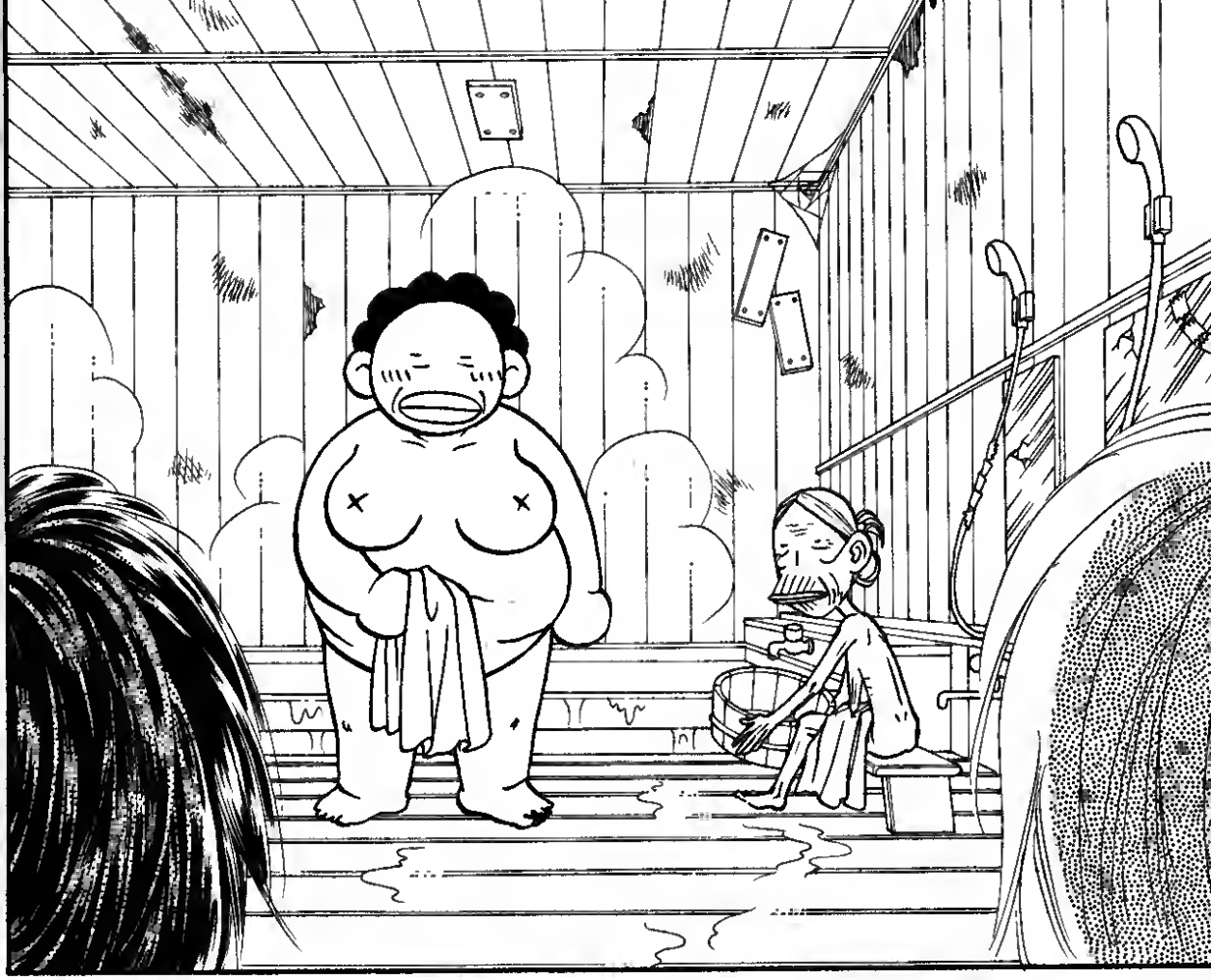

Huh?
That's how we can use them.
Grandpa.
ニタリ
SMIRK

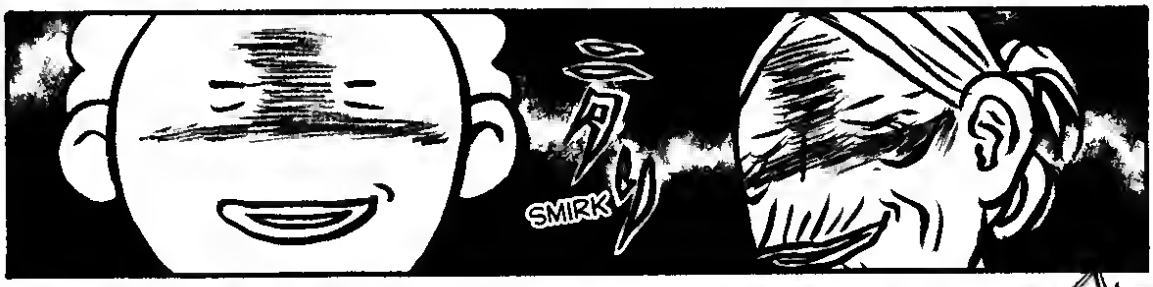
CHILL

Our dear guests, please, have a bath before dinner.
GRR
We don't need *you*.
You keep doing physical work.
W-With our bodies? You don't mean...!
Tsk, tsk.
Eh...?
Hee
hee
hee
If you'd like, I can have them wash your backs for you.
Owowowow... My back~~
WHISPER
WHISPER
Wait a second! No one said we'd have to go that far...!

Grandma...!
I'm so sorry. If the inn, the precious inn that Grandpa and I...
have defended all this time were to fall to ruin, all because I can't move...
Guh!
SMIRK
Fine! We just have to do it, right!?
Suzuki...
Keh.
Don't be so stingy. You could at least wash the guests' backs for them.
Aaahh!
Baths are meant to be entered in the nude!!
"What"? We're gonna get wet, so...
What are you doing?

Sheesh. Why do I have to do this...?
I can never be a bridegroom...
The guests are waiting. Hurry up now.
WHIMPER
WHIP
KARA
KARA
We beg your pardon.
Well, it is our job. It can't be helped.




SMIRK

SOB
SOB
How was the bath?
With the other group of guests.
SNIGGER

KYA
KYA
Ooooh! I'm so happy~~
Now, have a drink.
So true.
On second thought, it is a little embarrassing to suddenly have someone else wash your back.
Gyaa aaaahhh!

GARA
GARA
Excuse me.
I've come to get your bed ready.

Yeah, yeah, yeah.
Stop slacking off. Next you have to get the floor ready.

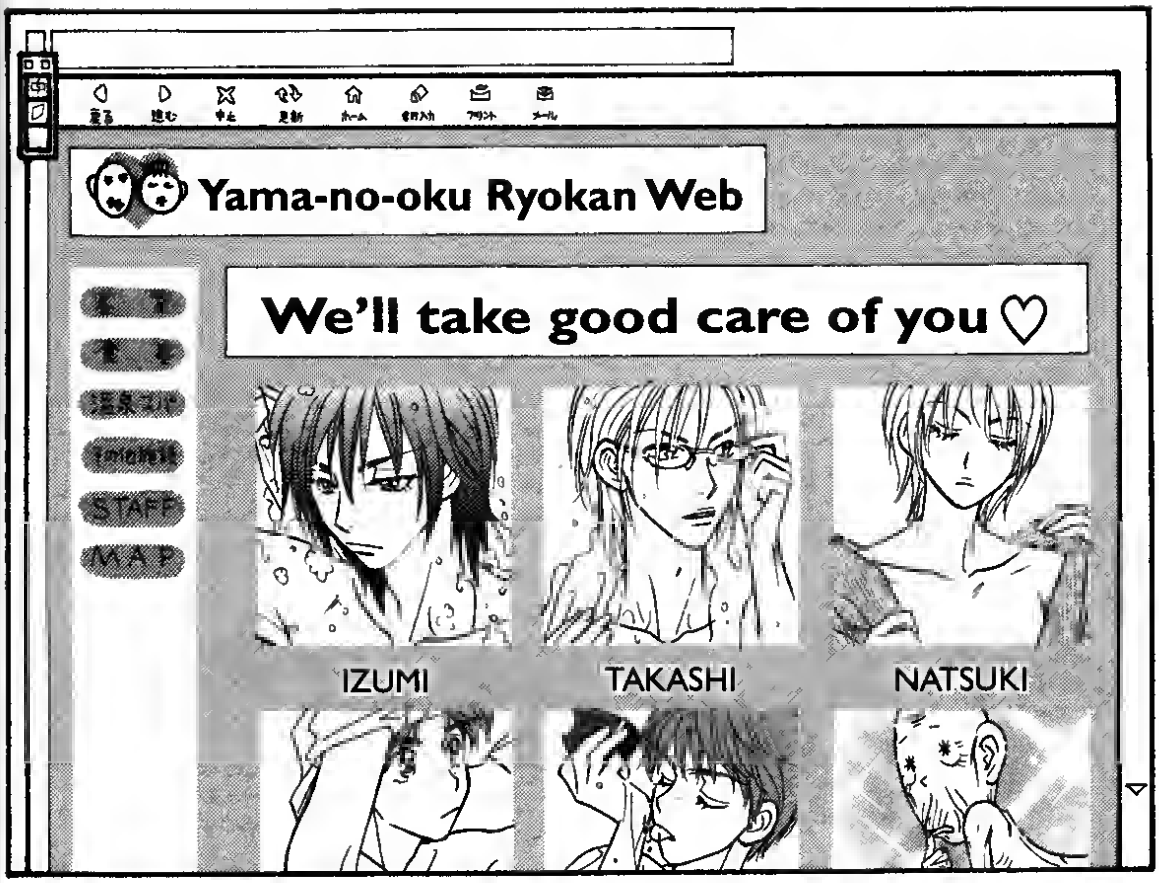
Let's get this over with and get out of here.

Again...

Oof.

!?
What are you do...
SHOVE
Eh!?
SNAP

Eeeeeeeeep!
BOING
Ee
GARA
DADAH!
P-Police! Call the police!
You're overreacting. And you call yourself a man.
It's not like you'll lose it, so give it your all, and do her that service.
When I was your age, well, I...
What do you mean, service...!?


Yama-no-oku Ryokan Web
We'll take good care of you ♡
STAFF
MAP
IZUMI
TAKASHI
NATSUKI

Owowowow...
Hey, everyone, we're goin–
I may never walk again~~
I'm through with this! I can't take it anymore!

We're in the age of the Internet, after all.
Maybe we'll start a blog or something.
What the hell is this!!?

Ugh.
ラ
Group of six to the Katabami Room~~
きゃあ
KYAA
きゃあ
KYAA

Yes...
山の奥
Um, we're out of rooms.
MISHI
Even if we have them share rooms, we can't fit any more...
FLIP
It's all right, it's all right. You have to make money when you can.
GLOOM
HOKU
KYA
.....
Izumi...
What are you doing? Go gather plants for dinner.
KONK
Um...
Are you okay?
STAGGER
I'm not okay...

Ah...
You're coming with me!
You're working at the Kawahara mixed open-air bath until four.
Ooohh, owowow.
.....
.....
Being all worn out like that...
I wonder if Izumi-sempai and the others will be okay.

I guess Grandma's back won't heal for a while.
I wonder when we'll be able to go home.
.....
Ah! Found a mushroom. Looks yummy!
All right! Today I'll work hard to make a delicious dinner!
And help Izumi-sempai and the others cheer up!
Ah! There are some here, too. Lucky!

I was able to get a lot of wild plants today, so I worked a little extra hard!
Please, help yourselves!
I don't know if you'll like it, though...
Awesome! Looks good!
Hana-chan, did you make all of this!?
Hana...
Hana-chan.
I'm sure we can go home soon.
So please, eat this and cheer up.

Izumi-sempai really is worn out.
Eh heh heh.
Thank you.
I feel bad for being so amused when he was having such a hard time.
Come on, if you don't hurry and eat it, it will get cold.
Then let's eat♡
©ohh! These mushrooms are good!
Eh?
There was only just enough for everyone.
Really?
If you like, you can have mine, too.
What's the matter, Hana? You got diarrhea or something?
Even I can share my food sometimes!
Yay! Lucky♡
I did make it for everyone today, after all.

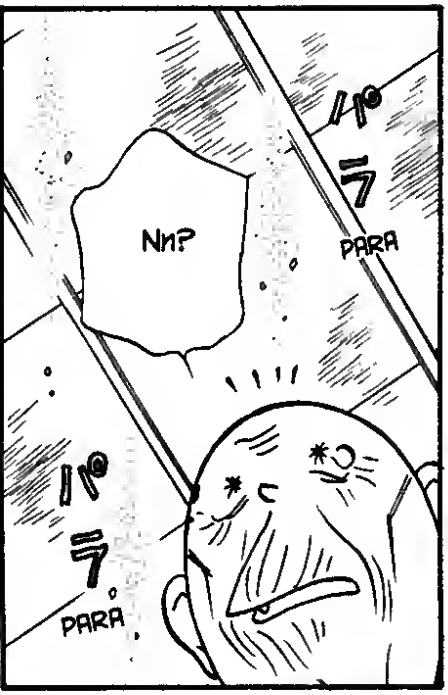
Well, thanks to Hana's dinner, I do feel like I'm up to doing this.
Shall we be off!?
Yeah!!
You need to be getting to the banquet hall to entertain our guests soon.
Yes, sir.
I'll be out to help you later.
Try your best.
I'm glad...
Leave it to us.

Have some more, miss.
Your glass is empty.
Have you had too much to drink?
Your face is red...
I think I might be drunk, too.

I'm hot...
TUG
GULP

It's true that fat stays cool.
Oh, you're right. You feel nice and cold.
Over here.
I have low body heat. Shall I cool you off?
I feel so hot...
What's wrong with us? I feel kind of weird.
Maybe I'll take my clothes off, too.
BAH

KYAAAAAAHH
RUMBLE
M-Me too!
I have low body heat, too!!
Wh—
What on earth is going on...?
They're trying *too* hard...


Nn?
PARA
PARA

G... Grandma...
Natsuki-kuuuun!
Why you little girls! I'm first!
Takashi-kun, where are you!?
Hey, let go!
GYAAAH
GYAAAH
Where are the twins!?
I found you ♡

DRAG
DRAG
What'll I do?
Am I sick or something?
Wh-Why!?
Stay away from me!

TWITCH
Izumi-kun, where did you go?
Huh? Izumi-kun!?
Oh, Hana.

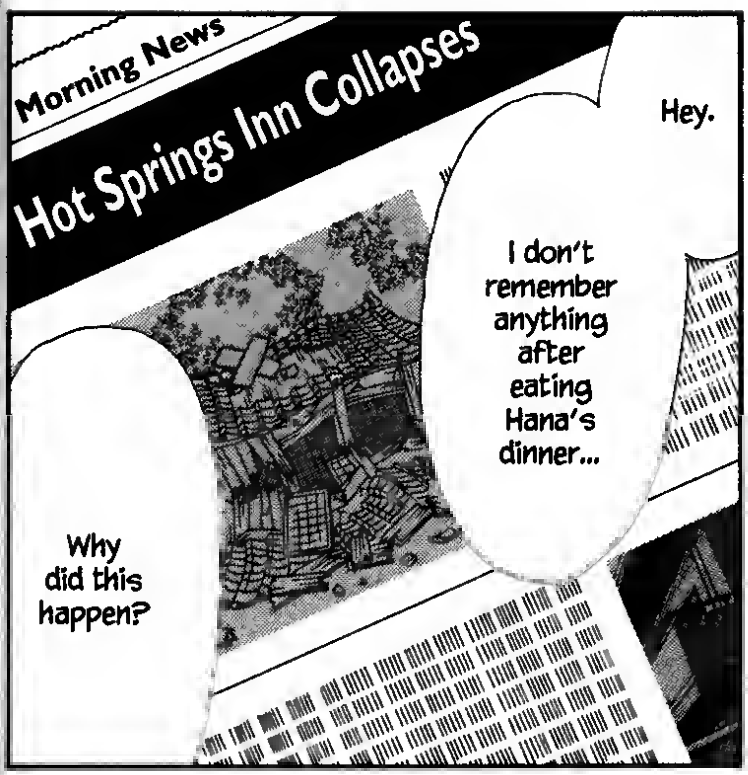
I'm *really* hot.
See?

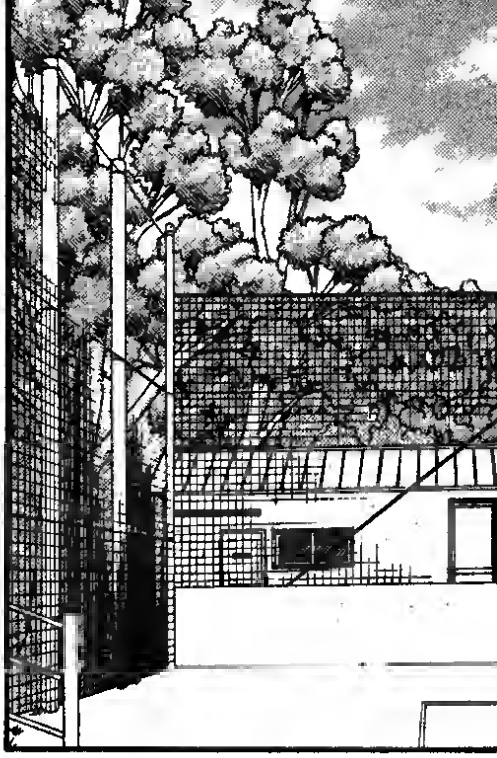
Wh...What's the matter with him!?
Something's really wrong with Izumi-sempai...!
H-Hey, everyone, settle down!
You're all too heavy as it is...!
THUD
BATA

No!
His eyes are kind of glazed over.
Umm, are you listening?
MISHI.
MISHI
I-Izumi-sempai?
With all that rough-housing...
Let go...!
Just a...!
Hana...
Gyaaahhh!
MISHI

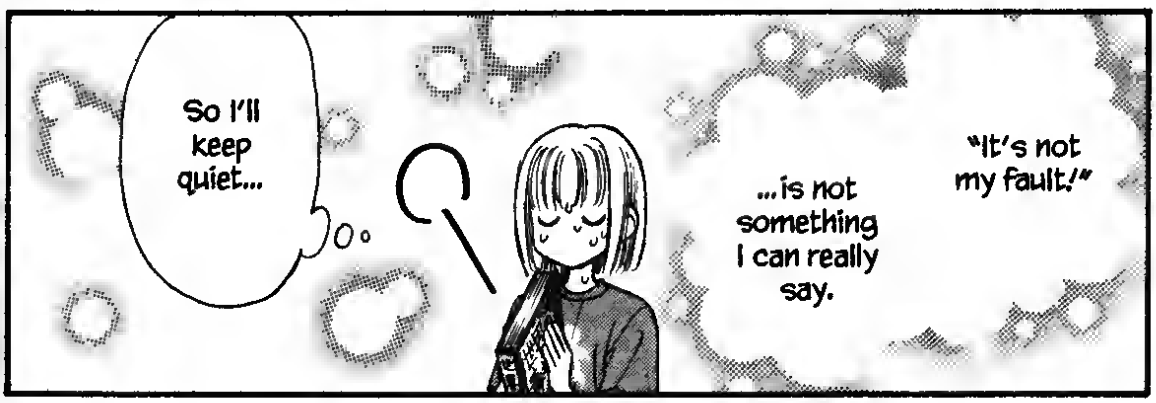
ドカーン
KABOOOOM

.....
PARA
OWOW
OWOW
OW
PARA
COUGH
AAAAAAAAAAAHHHH!
VAVOOOOM!


Morning News
Hot Springs Inn Collapses
Why did this happen?
I don't remember anything after eating Hana's dinner...
Hey.



So it was this one...?
MUSHROOMS
N-Not at all.
Don't you remember, Hana?
Dunno...


So I'll keep quiet...
...is not something I can really say.
"It's not my fault!"

The End

Chapter 11: Proof of Girlfriend-hood!?

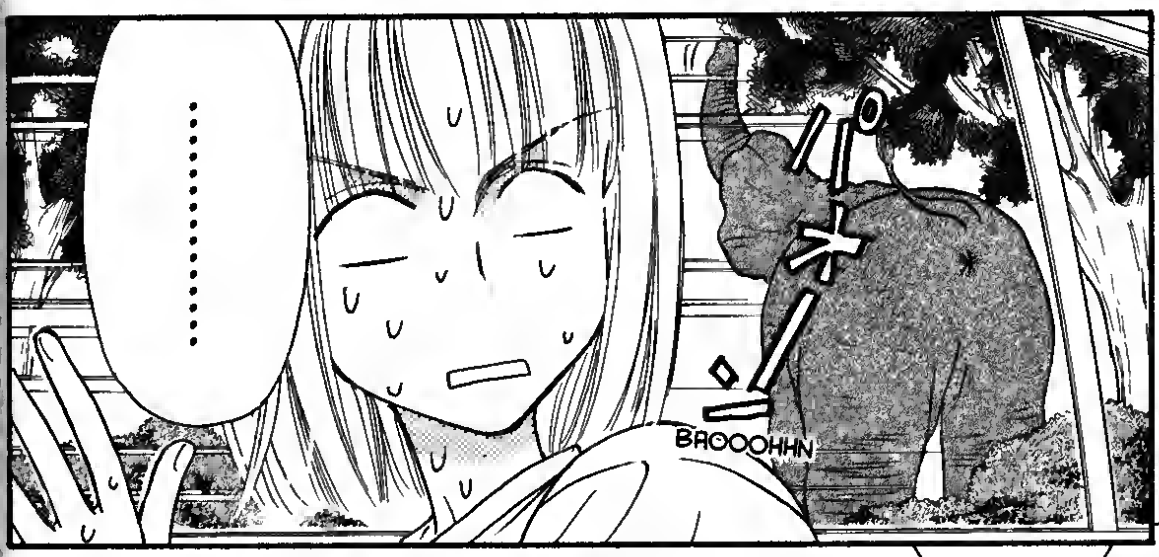
And then!
Mino MoXta called her "young lady"!
Suzuki Tofu
Wow.
I'm so jealous. And they say the fish shop owner's wife got a library card.
Why is Izumi-sempai here?
It's one o'clock already.
Ah, Hana.
How long were you gonna sleep?
I've sent postcards, too, but they never pick mine.
I had a strong impression there was a foreign creature in the living room...

Izumi-sama ♡
I was in the neighborhood, so I stopped by.
Don't speak to him that way.
He brought us some cream puffs. Thank him.
Yum...!!
It's really just not a cream puff unless it's got a layer of custard and a layer of fresh cream.
Stop it, Hana. Leave some for your father and grandfather.
CHOMP
CHOMP
CHOMP
Aww—
If you want more, why not come to my place?
Eh?

My cook made those cream puffs.
If you come home with me, there'll be lots of stuff, not just cream puffs.
I'll go ♡
Lucky...
VRRRRROOM
Wake up, Hana. We're here.
Uuuhhh...
As usual, it just feels too good, riding in this car...
You said we're here.
But the car's still going.
What is this? I could have kept sleeping.
YANBAN

We are here. This is my yard.
There, now you can see it. That's my house.
Eh?
.....!?

Y-Yard? This is all yours, Izumi-sempai!?
Yeah.
It's so big, you'd have to go to great lengths just to go to the convenience store!
It's not a safari park!


.....
BAOOOHHN

Does that mean...
...we're going to be alone...?
Thank you very much.
He's an only child, right?

SCREE
We're here.
My parents are away at work, so don't worry about them and make yourself at home.

It doesn't make sense anymore, so I'll decide not to think about it.
What's wrong?
BASH
BASH
?

I'm back.
Welcome home, Izumi-sama.
WOOF WOOF
わふっ
わふっ
TURN
くるっ
Hey, Hana?
Unusual guest?
And an unusual guest, as well.
Takashi-sama and the others are waiting.

I-I'm going home!!
I can't make myself at home with so many people keeping watch; I'm too nervous!
Sheesh. You're such a pain.

Oh? Hana-chan.
What's up? This is unusual.
You guys were here?
Natsuki-sempai~~~
Uwaaaaahhn!
Hana-chan, is this your first time coming here?
People I know! I feel so much better!

...Seeing him like this...
We really do come from different cultures.
BANBAN
What are you standing around for? Come over here and sit down.
DOKI
Y-Yeah.
There's only a paper-thin difference between being an idiot and having good upbringing.
Oh hey, who's the "unusual guest"?
No need to lift a finger.
SIT
Now I understand why he can't do anything...
Oh...

GULP
Ugh! Why didn't you tell me sooner!?
BATA
BATA
Cousin Izumi!
Uwah.
!

DODGE
KABOOM
BANBAN
She's cute...!
Oohh, a blonde.
I've missed y...
What are you doing here!?
That was mean! Why did you dodge!?
The Bon Festival and New Year's ended long ago!!
Izumi's second cousin, Tamako Satô.
Who is this?
Ojou-sama.
WOOF WOOF

Tamako Satô...?
Both of her parents are half Japanese.
But I couldn't come to Japan during the Bon Festival or New Year's.
And I just had to see you, Cousin Izumi.
Shoo
Shoo!
Okay, well you've seen me now, so go back to London!!
Tamako will be turning 16 next year.
I was thinking I would come back to Japan soon to train to be your bride, Cousin Izumi ♡
Eh!?
Listen to me, dammit!

Izumi-sempai, you're getting married?
And you're so young. Wow.
Of course I'm not!
She's just saying it because she wants it that way!
Cousin Izumi! Cousin Takashi!
8 years ago
Saying those things won't do you any good.
This is destiny.
PORO
I don't wanna.
Let's go, Takashi. Don't have anything to do with her.
I got a good shell today.
Let's do tortoise shell fortune-telling.

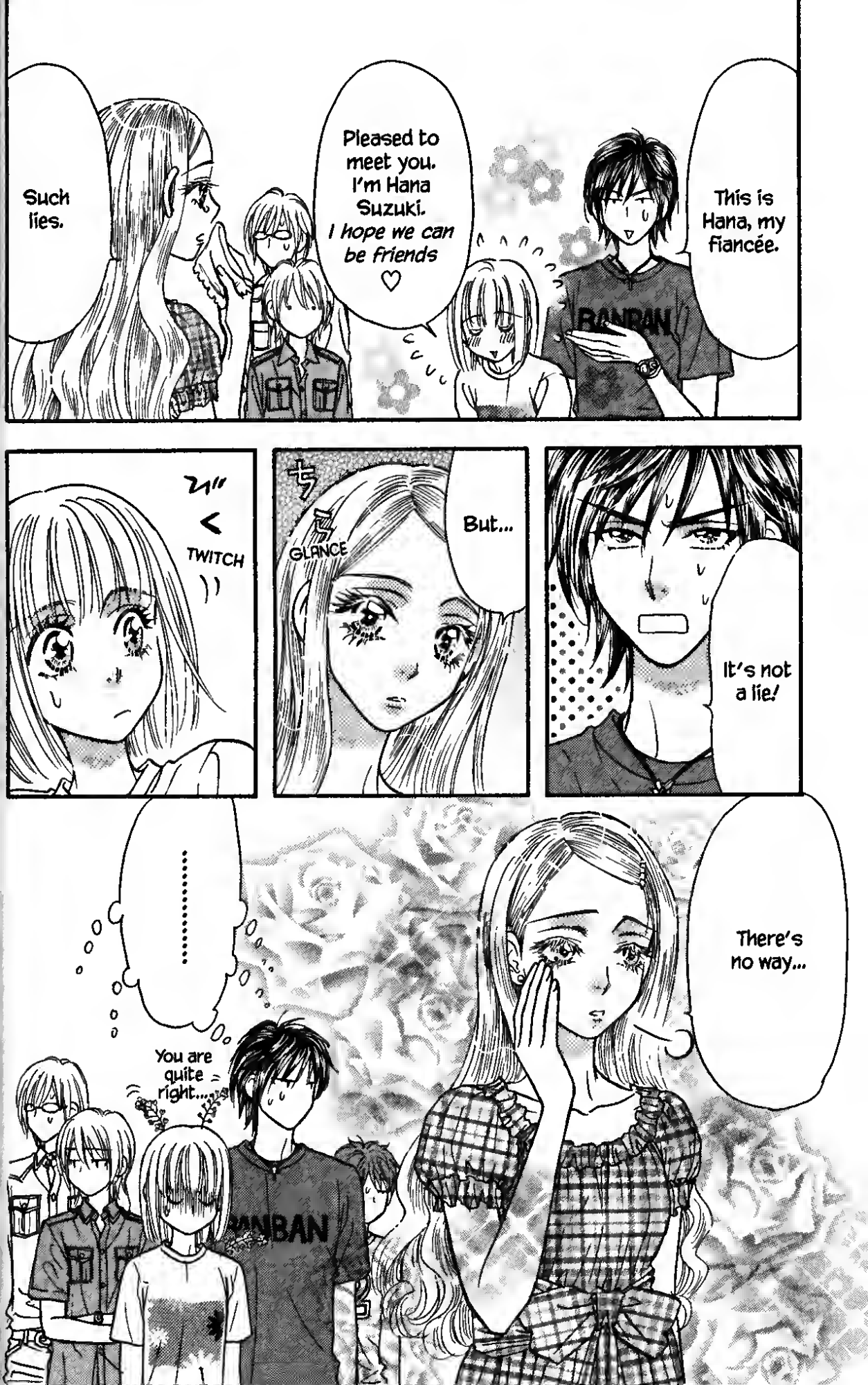
ぱあ
BEAM
F...
But only for a minute.
Fine.
ポロポロポロ
PORO PORO PORO
Hic
Hic
ピ
CRACK
MERA
メラ
Hmm...
Today we're going to predict who Tamako is destined to be with.
Tamako is sure it will be Prince William.
Ah.
SHOONK

GYAAAAHH!
I-Izumi!!
It landed on you.
Since that day, Cousin Izumi has been the one Tamako is destined to be with.
It has been determined that the two of us will be bound together.
STUNNED
PLUNK

PSSSHHHHH!
Are you all right, Cousin Izumi?
What do you mean, I'm destined to be with you? I almost died because of your weird fortune-telling!!
POP
I'll tell you as many times as it takes, but I'm not interested, so find someone else...
Aahh! Don't take it out!
I still have a bald spot here!!!
BANBAN
PORO
FLINCH
Ugh...
Ah, he made her cry.
He made a girl cry.
WORRY
WORRY
WORRY
WORRY
Cousin Izumi, do you hate Tamako...?

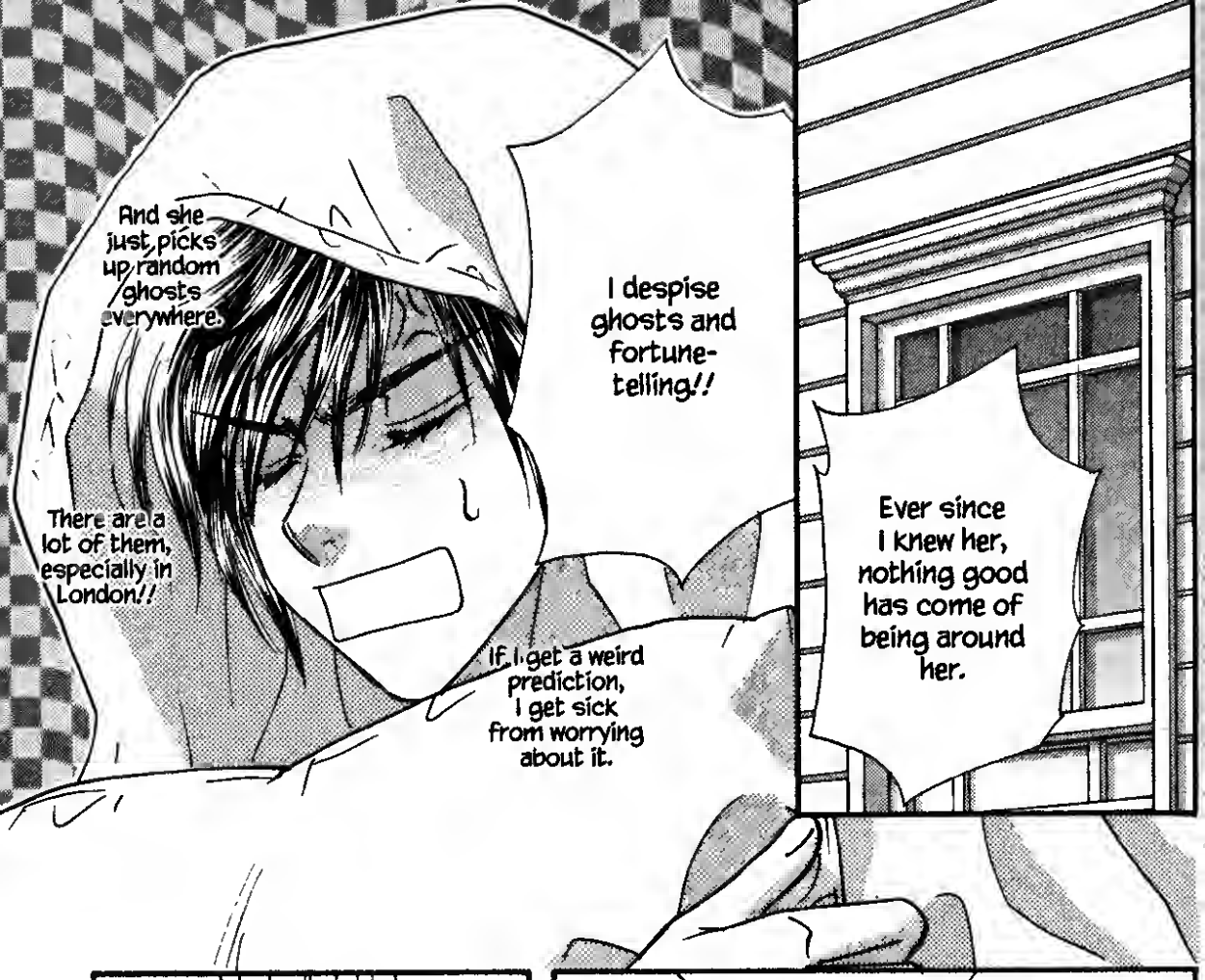
S-Sorry!
I'm very flattered.
But I've already set my heart on someone!!
Eh!?
YANK

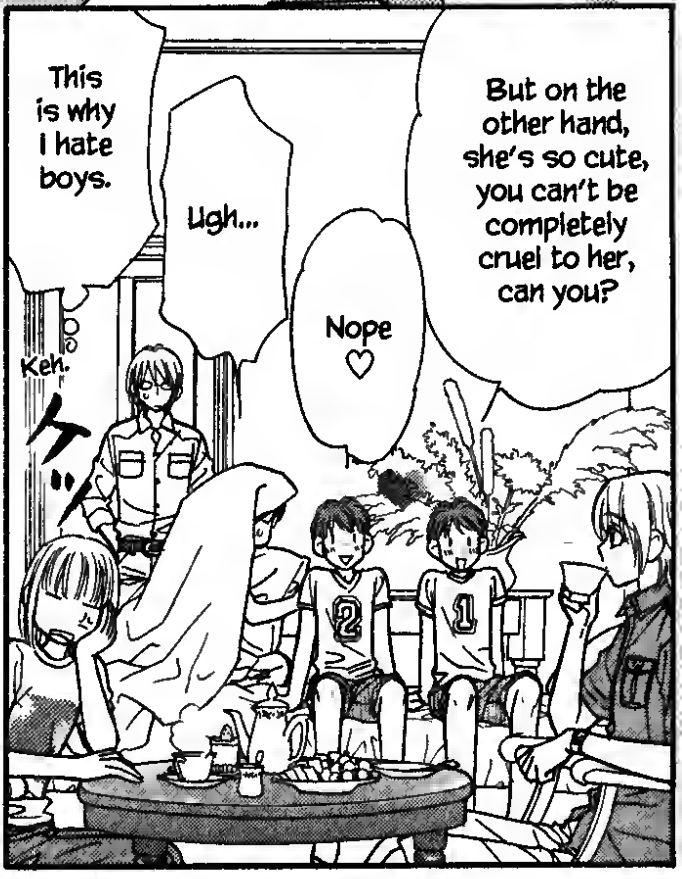
I'll let you eat cream puffs or whatever you want until you die later, so just play along!
H-Hey, Izumi-sempai!

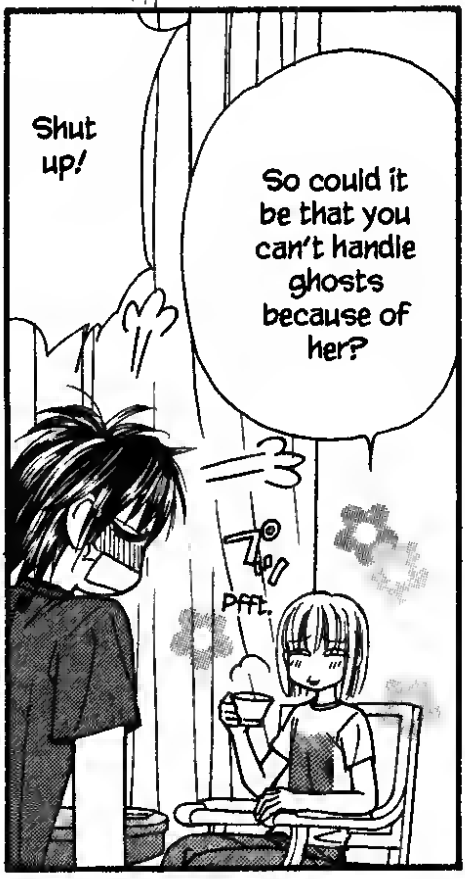

This is Hana, my fiancée.
Pleased to meet you. I'm Hana Suzuki. I hope we can be friends ♡
Such lies.
It's not a lie!
But...
GLANCE
TWITCH
There's no way...
You are quite right....
.....

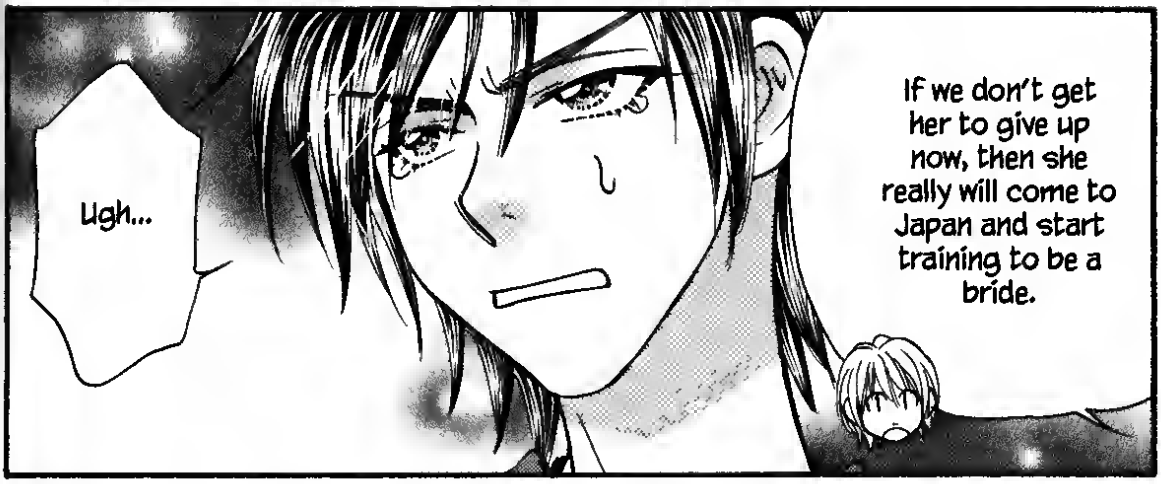
But why does Izumi-sempai seem to hate her so much?
Wouldn't a guy be happy that someone so cute likes him?
Normally.
Hey, Hana. Say something in your defense.
She's obviously a peasant. She doesn't suit you, Cousin Izumi.
Easier said than done...
Pheas-ant?
She doesn't quite understand, but she knows she's being insulted.
And she's the goalie in the hockey club.
Oh, is that so?
She's not a peasant. Despite her appearance, Hana-chan is a first year at Meirin.
Uh, yeah.
She's very important to Izumi, and to us.
Right, Takashi?

GYAAAHHH!
Tamako can be a goalie, too~~~
I will now channel the living spirit of Gretzky, the god of hockey!
Ojou-sama, that's ice hockey.
And he plays a different position.
DOKI DOKI
DOKI DOKI
THWAP
Evil Spirit, Begone
Is this it...?
Waaahh! A spirit has already descended!
Ojou-sama, be strong!
CRACK
She's the same as ever.
Easily possessed.
SNAP
Kyaaah!

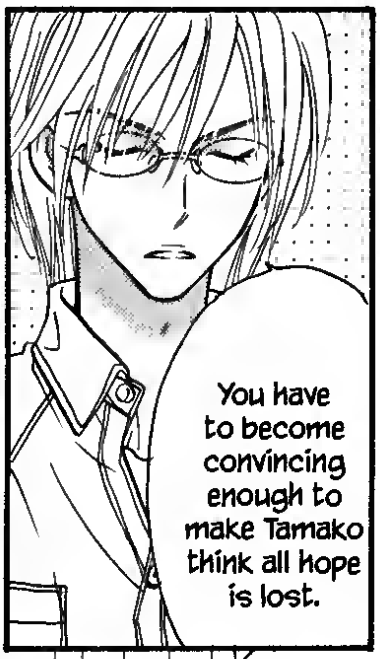

Ever since I knew her, nothing good has come of being around her.
I despise ghosts and fortune-telling!!
And she just picks up random ghosts everywhere.
There are a lot of them, especially in London!!
If I get a weird prediction, I get sick from worrying about it.


But on the other hand, she's so cute, you can't be completely cruel to her, can you?
Ugh...
This is why I hate boys.
Nope ♡
Keh.


So could it be that you can't handle ghosts because of her?
Shut up!
Pfft.


Ugh...
If we don't get her to give up now, then she really will come to Japan and start training to be a bride.

Yeah, yeah!

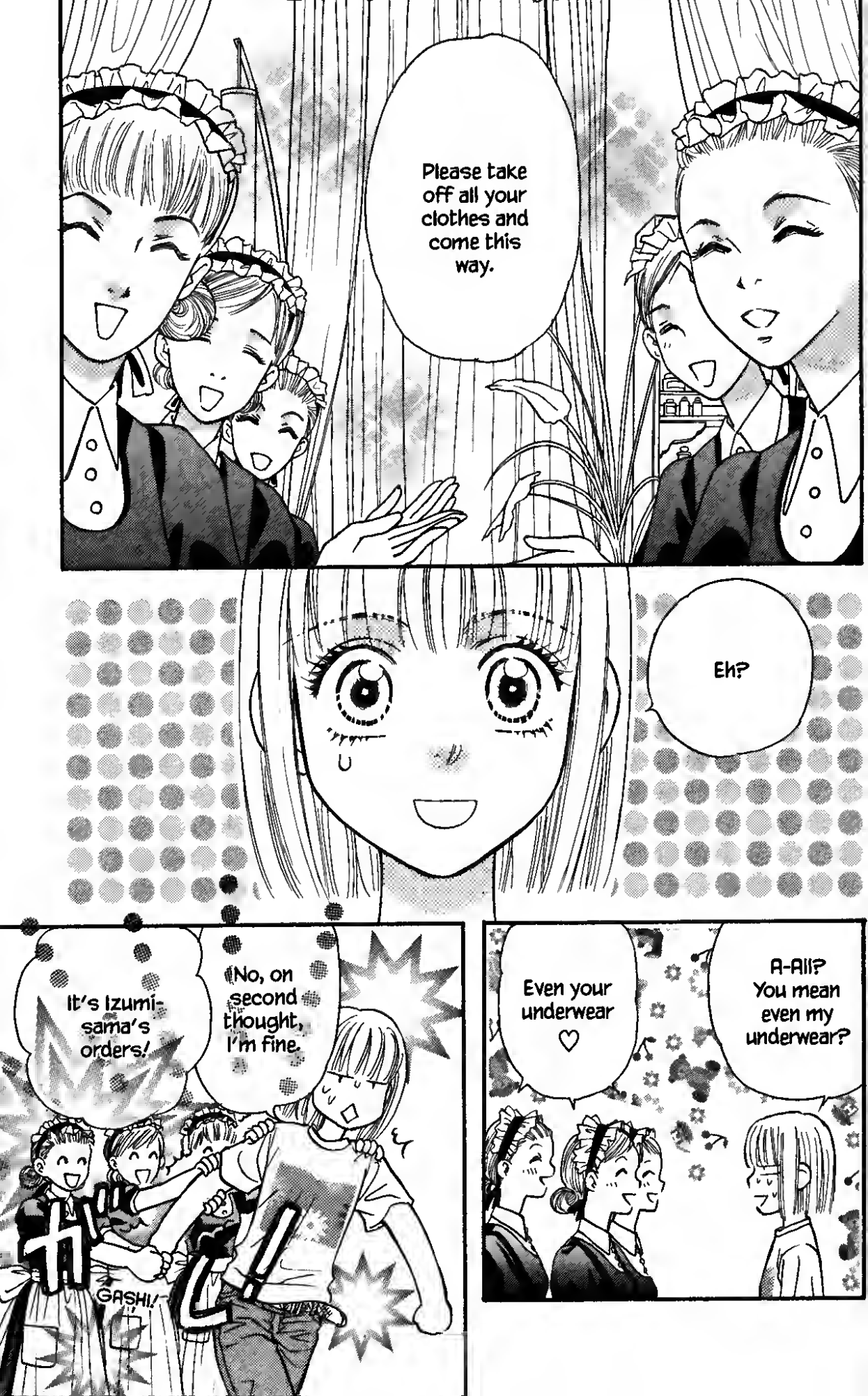

You have to become convincing enough to make Tamako think all hope is lost.

This is no laughing matter, Hana-chan. Izumi's future depends on you.

What's with that attitude? It's like you don't even care!
Give back those cream puffs I gave you earlier!!
We're like two different species...
Eeehh? I don't think it's possible.

I already ate them!
Don't mind if I do.
WHACK
Ow!
Don't lick the cream off the cellophane!!

Starting today, you're staying here.
BANBAN
2
We'll whip you into good enough shape to make up for your difference in species!!
Yes, sir...
WHIP
Don't hold the fork in your mouth!!
Ow!


Please take off all your clothes and come this way.
Eh?
A-All? You mean even my underwear?
Even your underwear ♡
(No, on second thought, I'm fine.
It's Izumi-sama's orders!
GASHI!

Stop!
Wait!
J-Just a–!
What do you think of this hair-style?
For now, we really do need to start with her looks.

SLAAAM
Wh-What is the matter!?

We're sorry for the noise.
We're just giving her full-body treatment!
It's nothing.
Aaaaahhh!

No!
AAAHHH!

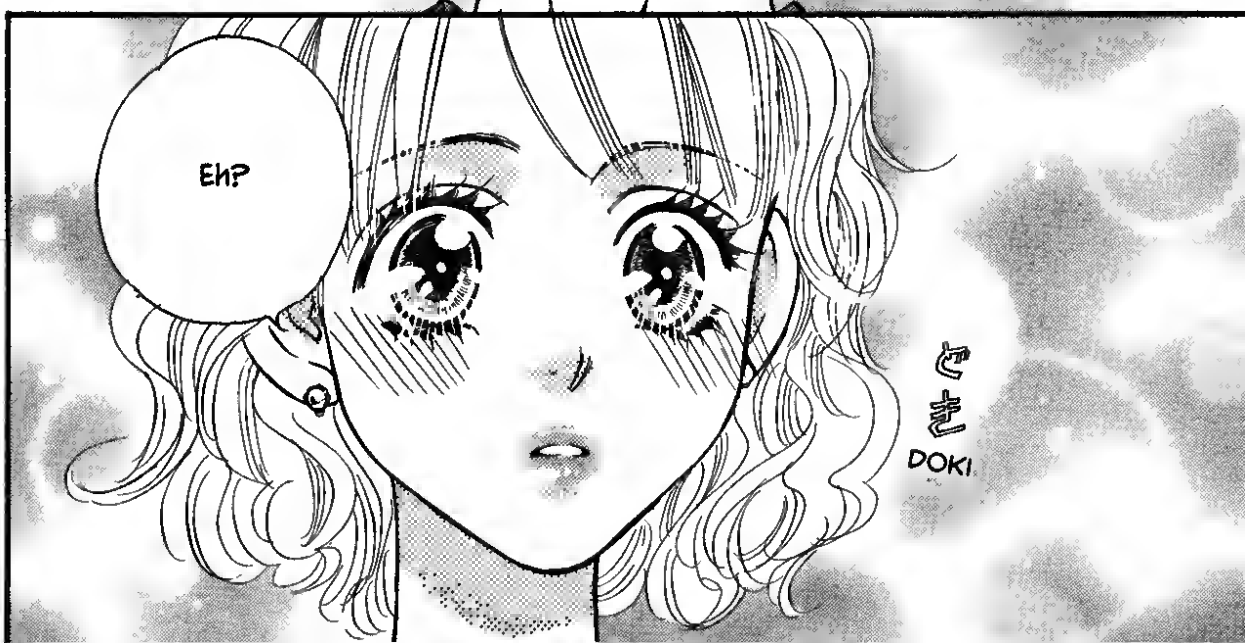
We're the ones who were embarrassed!!
It was embarrassing, but it felt nice...
STEAM
STEAM
BANBAN
Uuuuuuuhhh...
Quiet!
I'm tired...
Can I change into pajamas?
Now, change clothes.
BANBAN
What?
Like him.
Or him.
Maybe rich people have no shame.
STARE
BANBAN
Eh?
We've chosen some suitable things for you.

250,000 YEN
100%
*¥2,500
Uwaahh.
It's so cute...
I'll go with pajamas after all...
Uwaaahh, I'm touching it!
No!
Then I guess I'll...
Go change...
BANBAN
Don't move like a clod and tear it or get food on it!
Y-Yes, sir...
To be a beautiful person, you start with beautiful conduct!
I know you're not used to these things.
Start with casual wear and get used to wearing it!

Certainly!
Do her hair and makeup.
Ow!
WHIP
Stand up straight!!
Don't hunch over when you walk!!
Again...
Aaaaahh!
VOOOHHN
OW OW OW OW!
Ah, aahh!
I-I'm fine! I can do it myself!
Although her expression is a bit...
Something like this?
EXHAUSTED
Yeah, it'll do.
Ooohh.

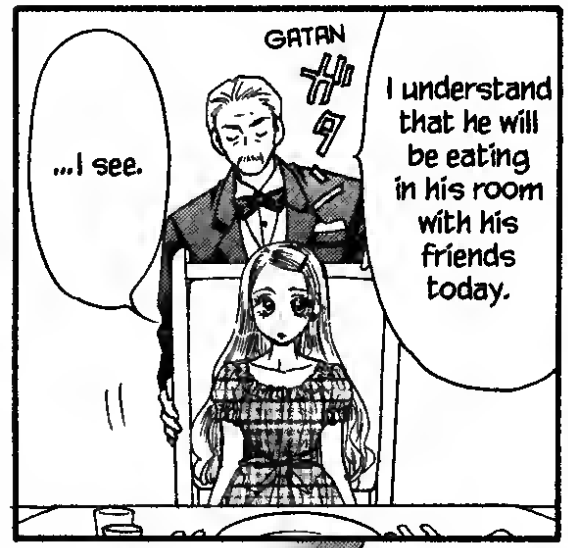
It worked out better than we thought.
She looks pretty good if she just sits quietly, don't you think?
Hey! How dare you talk about me like that.
Better than we thought.
If she sits quietly.
BANBAN
We're kidding, kidding! You look really good.
Right!? Izumi-sempai.
Yeah.
BANBAN

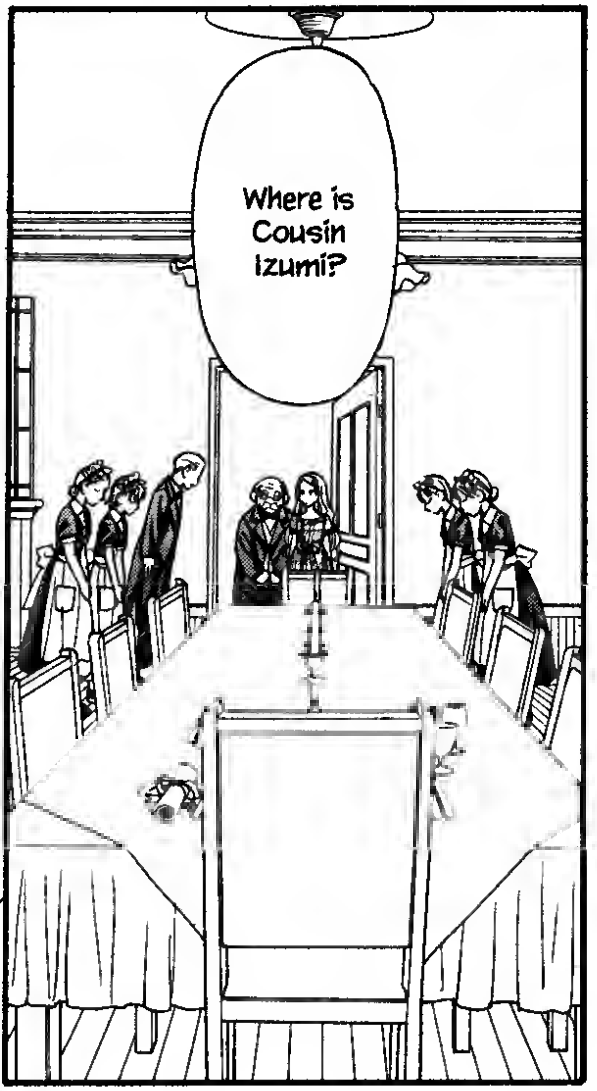
I guess you're pretty cute.


Eh?
どき
DOKI

I can sleep anywhere...
Really good at...
Hana-chan, is there anything you're really good at?
You're right.
Well, we've worked out her appearance. Now the problem is what's on the inside.
R-Really?
Eh heh heh.
I can do the Lantern Festival dance...
What about dancing?
What about making tea, or arranging flowers?
Ah, oh yeah.
.....
SHAKE
SHAKE
One cleeeaaar—
Sing us a little something.
Oh, and the castanets and triangle.
The Pianica and the recorder?
Any musical instruments?

.....
For now, I think we'll start with etiquette.
It can't be helped. We'll try different things.
DING
チーン


...I see.
GATAN
ガタ
I understand that he will be eating in his room with his friends today.


Where is Cousin Izumi?

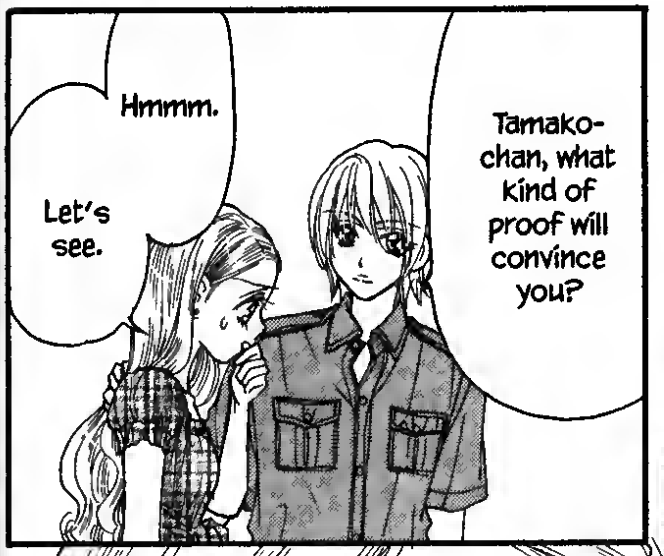
I wonder what he's doing.
I was so looking forward to seeing him, but Cousin Izumi has been shut up in his room this whole time.

Say, is that girl really Cousin Izumi's fiancée?
Hmm, that's a good question. It's the first time he's brought a girl over.
.....
If you're served from the left, use your left hand.
NOD
NOD
And at first, don't take more than two.
I said use your left hand!
WHIP
Don't sleep!
But~~
So much happened today, I'm tired.
SHPAH
SHPAH
Your lectures sound like a lullaby...

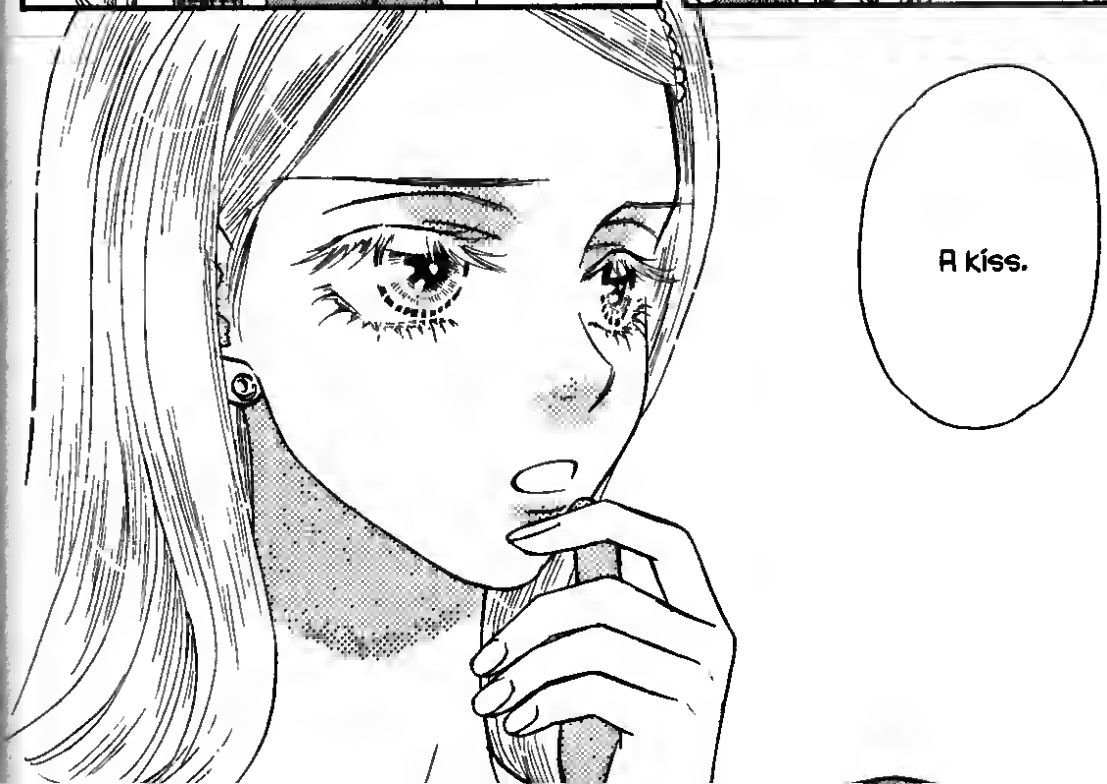
KNOCK
KNOCK
Yes?
And why do I have to do this, anyway...?
MUTTER
MUTTER
Um...
May I come in?
KACHA
FLINCH
C-Can I help you?
I ate dinner by myself, so I was lonely.
If you don't mind, I would like to join you...
SNOOOOORE
POP
POP
POP

H-Hana! Are you okay!?
Hana-chan!
Is that girl really your fiancée, Cousin Izumi?
Here, a towel and some ice!
GAHAH
I...
Huh?
I told you it's true, didn't I? Get off my case.
But she really doesn't suit you.
And it wasn't natural, when you introduced her.
This is the first time I've seen someone blowing bubbles in their soup. I mean, I don't think I'll ever see it again.
Shut up! If I say it's true, then it's true!
Even if she doesn't suit me and is plain-looking and has a flat chest, it's true!!
Then I demand proof! Proof!
BANBAN

Proof, proof, proof! What are you, in fourth grade?
I don't have any proof!
Flat chest?
Then I'm not convinced!


Tamako-chan, what kind of proof will convince you?
Hmmm.
Let's see.

Come on, you two, calm down.
Haa
Haa


A kiss.

STAR
STAR
STAR
STAR
STAR
Kiss her. Right here and right now.
1
Ki-!?
Fine.

Tamako never goes back on her word.
Not a friendly kiss—a kiss between lovers.
Iz—
If I do what you say, you'll really give up on me, right!?
Izumi-sempai!!?

Hana.
TWITCH
TURN
H-Hey, Izumi.
J...
Just a— Izumi-sempai, you're not really...
MARCH
MARCH
He hasn't even eaten any mush-rooms!
GAH

No way!!!
I'm sorry. I really can't stand ghosts.
No
The End

Chapter 12: Mistakenly Marrying into Money!?

No
I'm sorry. I really can't stand ghosts.
No way!!!
Izumi-sempai!?

GUH
GUH
GUH
GUH
GUH
Just—
Just a minute. What are you thinking?
Shut up. My future depends on this. It'll be over soon, so deal with it!
GUH
GUH
GULP...
Izumi-sempai, you're the worst...!
STRUGGLE
STRUGGLE
STRUGGLE
Just hold still!
...!
Just a...
Stop...!

I can't take it after all!!!
WHAP
Again!
Poltergeist...!?
SNAP
CRACK
SNAP
Are you here, Izumi?
We just got—
KAPOW
home...

.....
Eh!?
Izumi's parents.
Welcome, Tamako-chan.
It's been a long time, Uncle, Aunt.
POP
We were only gone for two or three days. And you still get so lonely after you've grown so big.
My, Izumi. Such a passionate welcome.
SM
H

No, she didn't.
Did she have Izumi-sempai in a different marriage?
These two...!?
Like this.
No, I thought he might be a wind-up toy...
Hana-chan?
Ow!
H-Hana Suzuki. Pleased to meet you.
Who might you be?

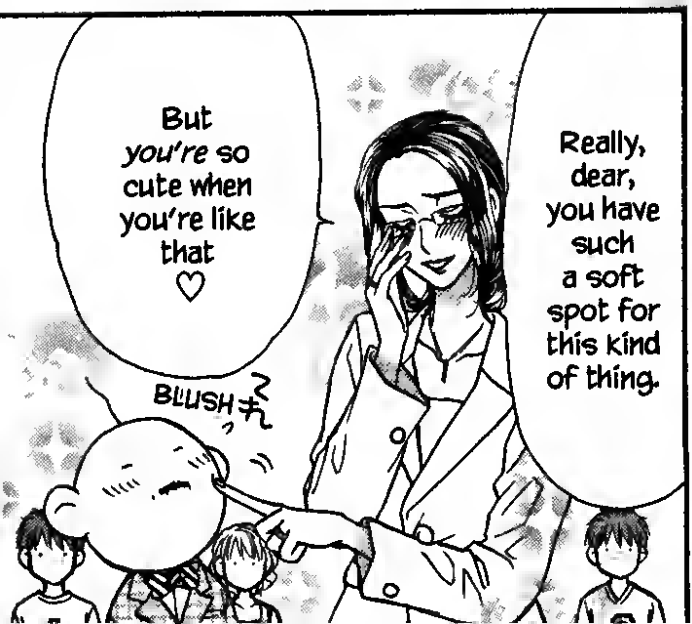
Pleased to meet you?
GULP
.....
I knew it!
You lied about her being your fiancée! A fiancée would know your parents!
Fiancée?
WIPE
I-I decided for myself! It's none of my parents' business!
BAN BAN
Ah. He recovered.
Of course it's our business. What is this about, Izumi?
This is perfect.
Let's have Aunt and Uncle decide.

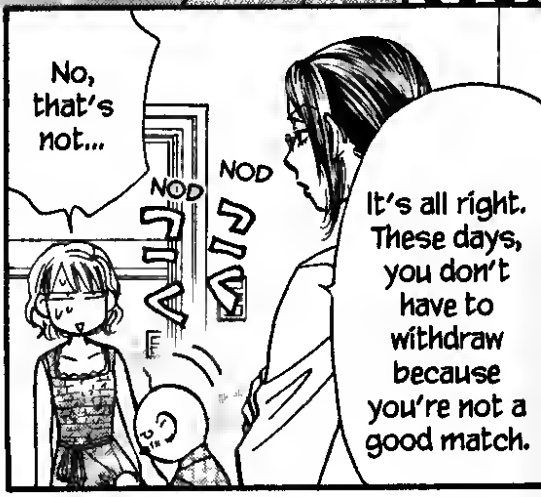
No.
Which of us is fit to marry into the Oda family!
I challenge you!!
To kill the general, first kill his horse!
Oh, my.
This isn't worth the effort. I'm going home.
I'm a *commoner*, so we're not a good match anyway. I withdraw from the competition. I wish you happiness.
Ah! Hey, Hana!
Oh, lucky me!
スタ STALK
スタ STALK

No!
Don't you care what happens to me!?
What was all that, "It'll be over soon, so deal with it" crap?
Just because you're fine with it...!

How modest and refined...!
Eh?
Uh, um.

HORO

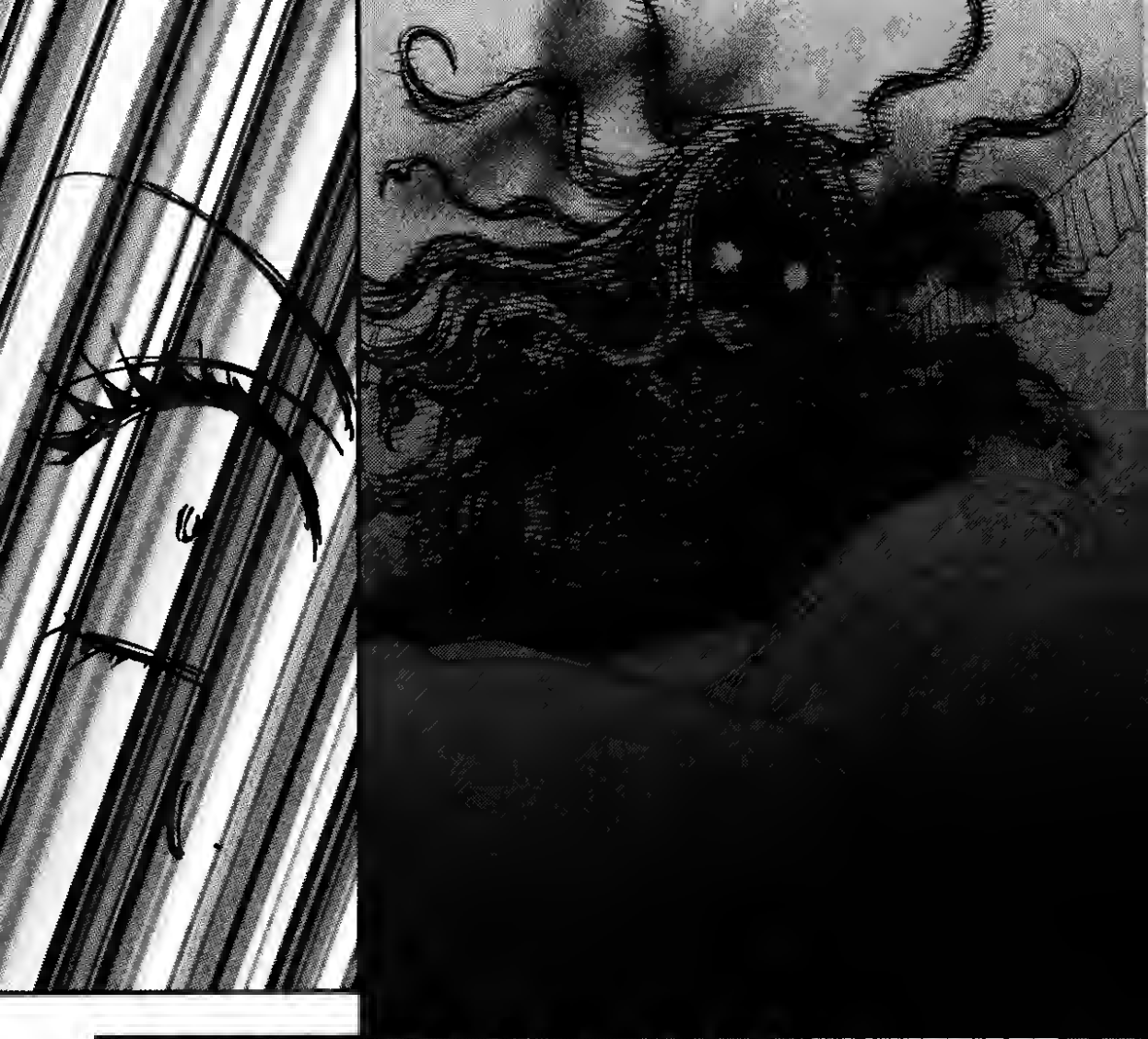

But you're so cute when you're like that ♡
BLUSH
Really, dear, you have such a soft spot for this kind of thing.

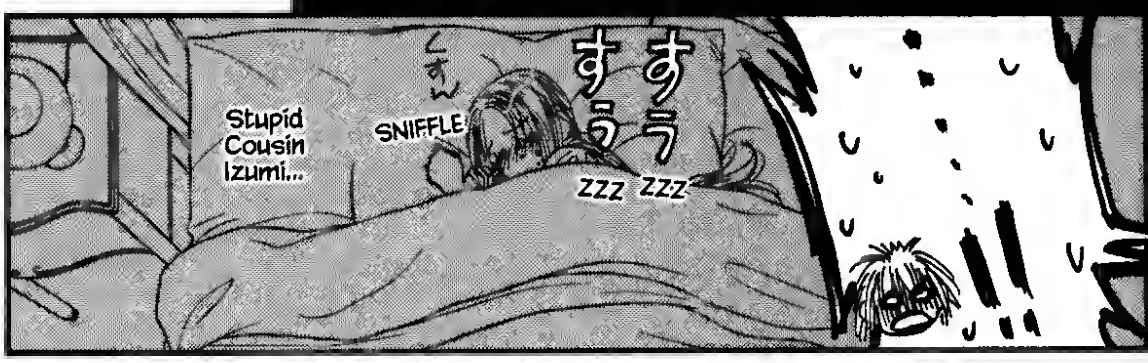

No, that's not...
NOD
NOD
It's all right. These days, you don't have to withdraw because you're not a good match.

Hana-san, Tamako-san, make yourselves at home.
I'm looking forward to this.
Really, Izumi. When did you get to be so popular?
You're just like your father when he was young.
By the way, he's still alive.
Grandfather
I have genes that skipped his generation, so I'll have a full head of hair until I die!!
Besides, he still has one hair!
You got a problem with my parents!?
Why are you looking at me like that!?
Which means, in the future...
So you take after your father, Izumi-sempai.
BANBAN
Ugh!
Besides, I'm going home, so it's none of my business.
HMMM
Not really.

Well, look at you! Is that any attitude for someone who's apologizing!?
Dammit, Hana, here I am being all humble, and you give me *that* attitude?
You don't mean it!
S-
Sorry.
Oohh, they're completely in synch.
Do not!!
You really get along, don't you?
.....

Tamako-chan really does love Izumi-sempai.
I kind of... feel sorry for her...
Izumi-sempai should just choose Tamako-chan already.
If she's that cute, he shouldn't care about the ghosts...
GLOOM
!?
My body...
my chest hurts.
Wh-What is this? All of a sudden...
Heavy...




Stupid Cousin Izumi...
SNIFFLE
すぅ
すぅ
zzz zzz

Good morning ♡
Tamako-san, you're awfully cheerful this morning.
Yes. When I woke up, I just felt so refreshed ♡
.....
Oh, Hana-chan. A bride mustn't sleep the day away.
You're right. Eh heh heh heh heh.
Gyaaahh!
Paralyzed until morning.
I won't last at this rate.
I reeeeeally understand how much Tamako-chan loves Izumi-sempai...
I really should just make them hate me enough to let me go home ASAP.
This morning, Tamako made her specialty!
I feel bad for Izumi-sempai.
But oh well. It's not really my concern.

I think a bride really should be able to *cook*.
It's Tamako's very favorite food ♡
Voila ♡
LICK ペロ～
LICK ペロ～
I specialize in eating~~
My, I'm looking forward to it.
Do you cook, Hana-san?
Eehh? Nothing~~
Dammit, Hana, what are you trying to do?
Oh, I see.
.....

NICHA
NUGAAAHH
Say "ah" ♡
What is that?
Dunno... I can tell it's really rich, though.
Do you like it? It's a king-sized candy bar fritter ♡
With nougat ♡

BAH
Doctor, the hemorrhaging won't stop!!
What's the matter, Uncle? Hang in there!
Dear!
What on earth is she feeding this middle-aged Japanese man!?
English u bringing is not to be taken lightly...!!
Um, Tamako-chan...?
BANBAN

We're in the middle of other emergency operations, and we don't have enough blood. We need your help.
Uh, um.
Does anyone here have blood type B?
I do...
BANBAN

Thank you, Hana-san.
We owe you his life.
This must be destiny.
Izumi found a nice girl.
Uh, um!
Please, marry into our family...!!

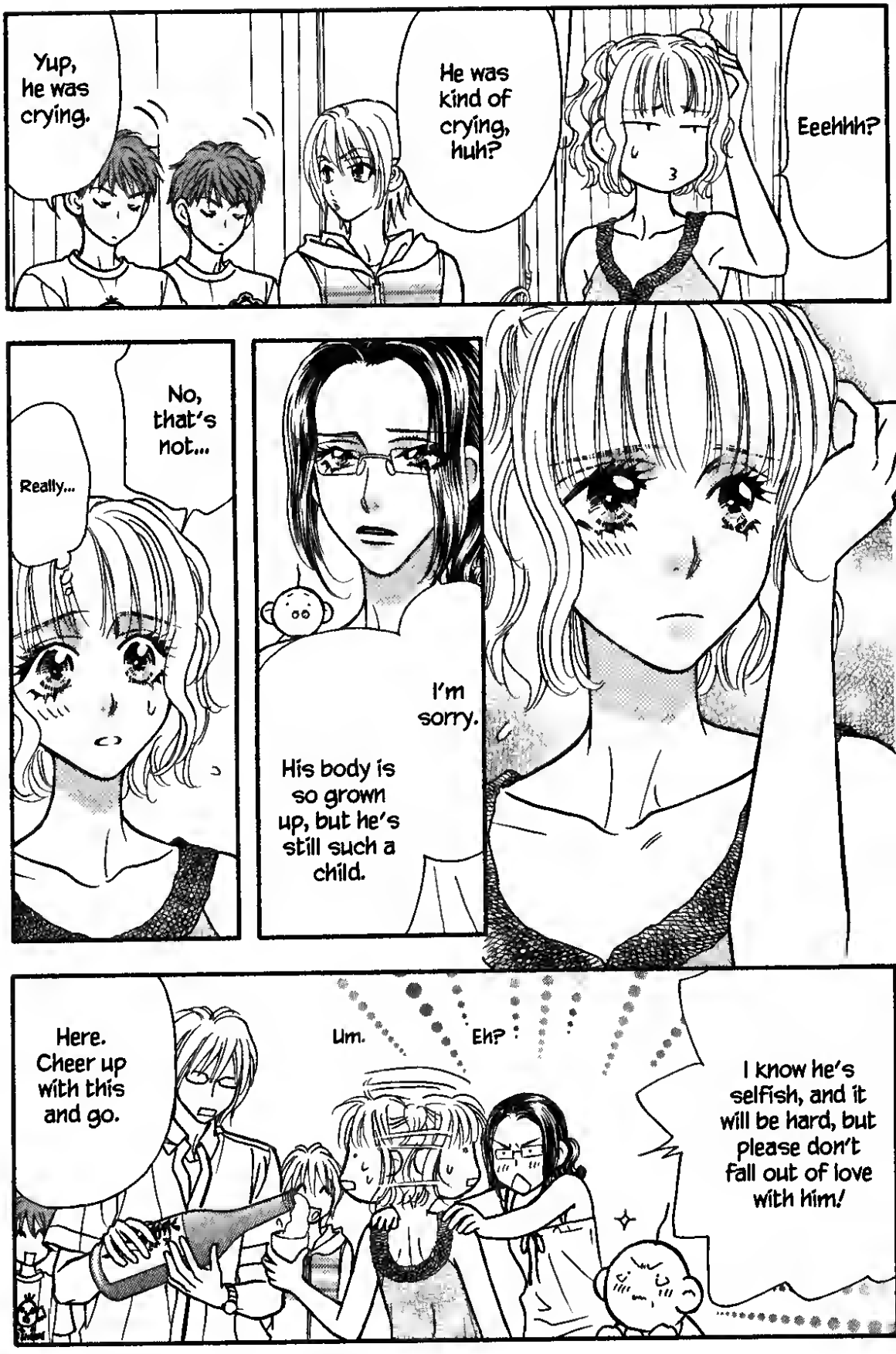
It's unfortunate about Tamako-san, but it can't be helped.
.....
Ah!
Tamako-chan!
GACHA
JIWA
Have you set a date for the wedding?
Well?
Wedding...!?
Wed—

An overseas wedding might be nice.
When did she...!?
Would you prefer a church? Or a Shinto wedding?
UKI UKI
Taisho Era Shinto Shrines
Romantic Churches
WEDDING
B-But, we're still in high school...
If you're getting married anyway, let's have the ceremony right away.
Oh? But such a joyous event should be held as soon as possible.
Mom, we're not getting married yet...
Hey, what's that supposed to mean...!?
It does have a nice ring to it, but it is Hana-chan.
Yeah.
Child bride...
BANG
It has a nice ring to it.
A child bride.
I almost wish I could have been one.

Uncle, Aunt. Izumi is not yet at an age where he can marry.
R-Really!?
Good job, Itoigawa-sempai!!
Oh, that's right.
Awww.
That's too bad.
Whew.
But we'll reserve a hotel for the reception.
For now, we can exchange engagement gifts.
Hana-san, where do you live? We must call on your parents.
Ah!
Um!!
The truth is, I was just forced into this. I have no intention of marrying the likes of Izumi-sempai!
Ah! Hey, Hana! Don't tell them that!

And what do you mean the likes of Izumi-sempai!?
My, they're already feeling marriage blues.
Well, at this rate, they'll really make us get married!
Do you hate the idea of marrying me that much!?
SHOCK
ガーン
Of course I hate it!
MUKA
MUKA
ムカ
ムカ
Keh.
She loves you so much, what's wrong with Tamako-chan?
You'll get used to the ghosts soon enough!
Hey, Izumi.
Izumi-sempai?
STALK
STALK
スタ
スタ
……
ムカ
MUKA
BAN BAN

Forget it.
WHISPER
Stick girl.
PATAN
Wha...!?
WHAP
You said too much.
Go apologize.

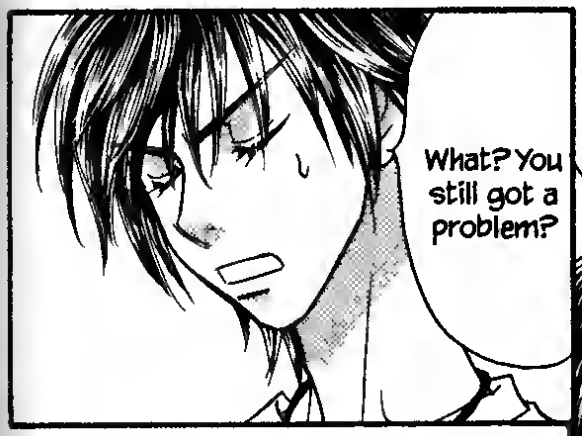

Yup, he was crying.
He was kind of crying, huh?
Eeehhh?
No, that's not...
Really...
I'm sorry.
His body is so grown up, but he's still such a child.
Here. Cheer up with this and go.
Um.
Eh?
I know he's selfish, and it will be hard, but please don't fall out of love with him!

Damn that Hana!
MUKA
MUKA
MUKA
MUKA
MUKA
MUKA
I don't know why,
but I'm pissed!
Cousin Izumi.
TWITCH
Bathroom, bathroom.
TURN
...Um
I'm sorry. The way I am...
Of course you would hate me, Cousin Izumi.
PORO
PORO
Ojou-sama...

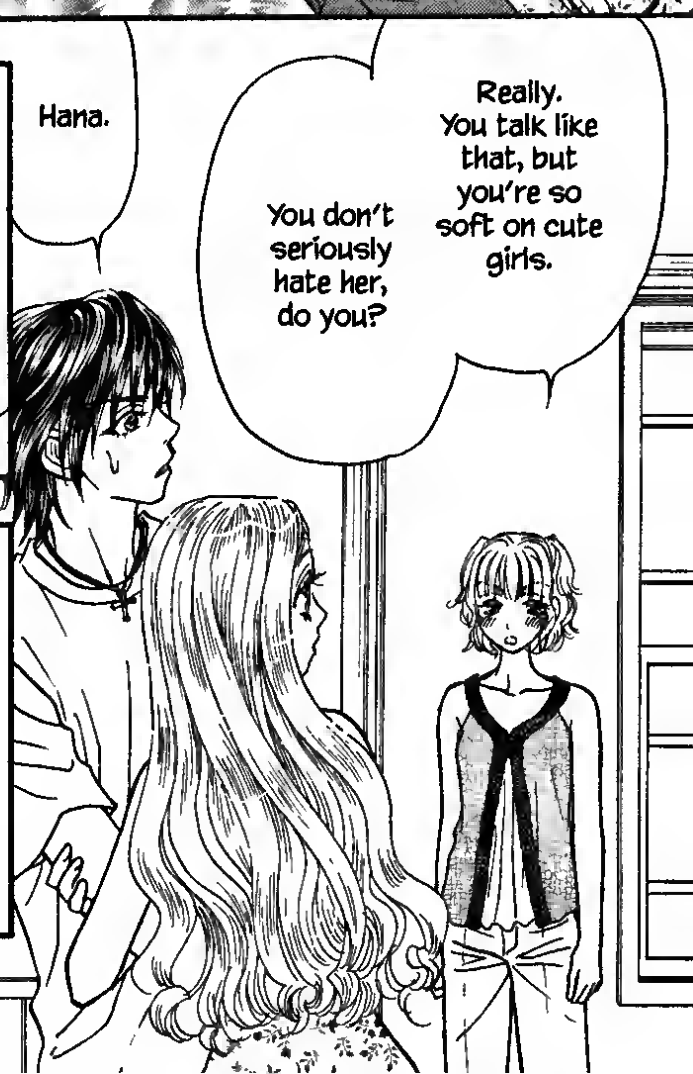
.....
Maybe I
should go back to London...
ぐしゃ
RUFFLE
...I don't
really hate you.
BANBAN

Oh, Cousin Izumi, you're so bashful ♡
F-forget I said that!
On second thought, go back to London!
Shoo, shoo!

So I don't have to give up, then ♡
Crap...!
I'll do my best ♡
GYUU


What? You still got a problem?

Yeah. I'm sorry.


Hana.
You don't seriously hate her, do you?
Really. You talk like that, but you're so soft on cute girls.

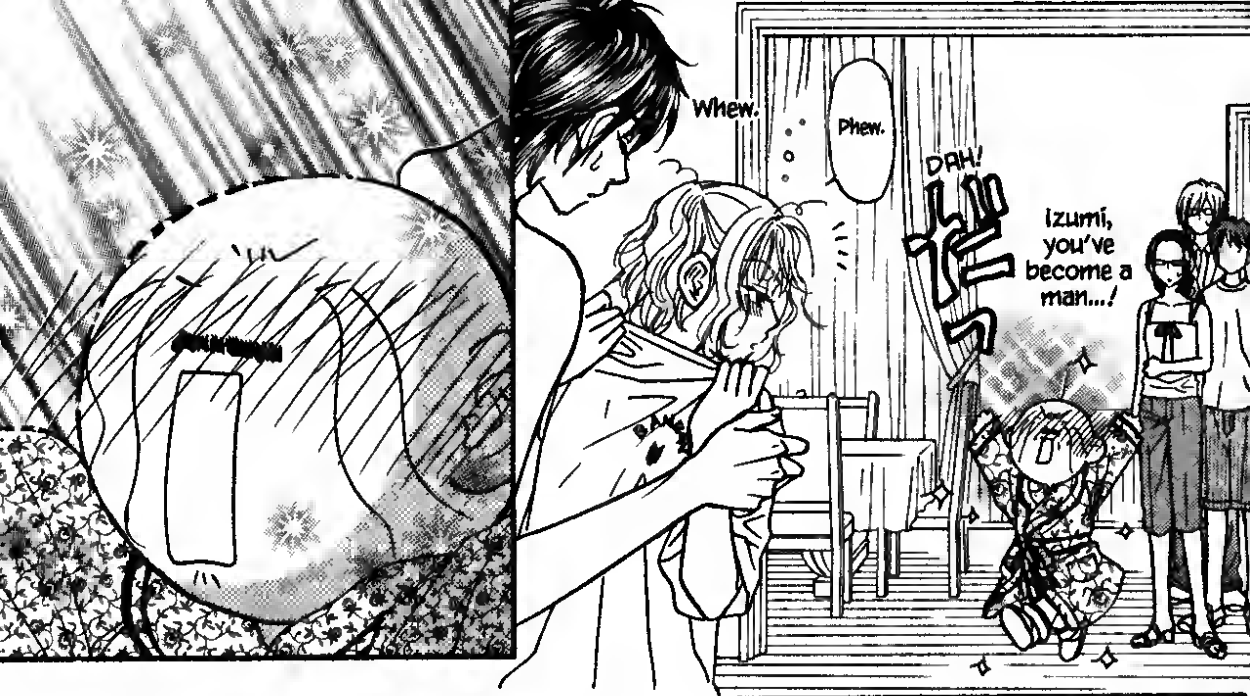
Eh?
I got carried away and said too much.
I...
don't hate you that much, Izumi-sempai. You do give me lots of yummy food.
I'm sorry I made you cry.
I...
I wasn't crying.
What is this, all of a sudden?
It creeps me out when you're so open...

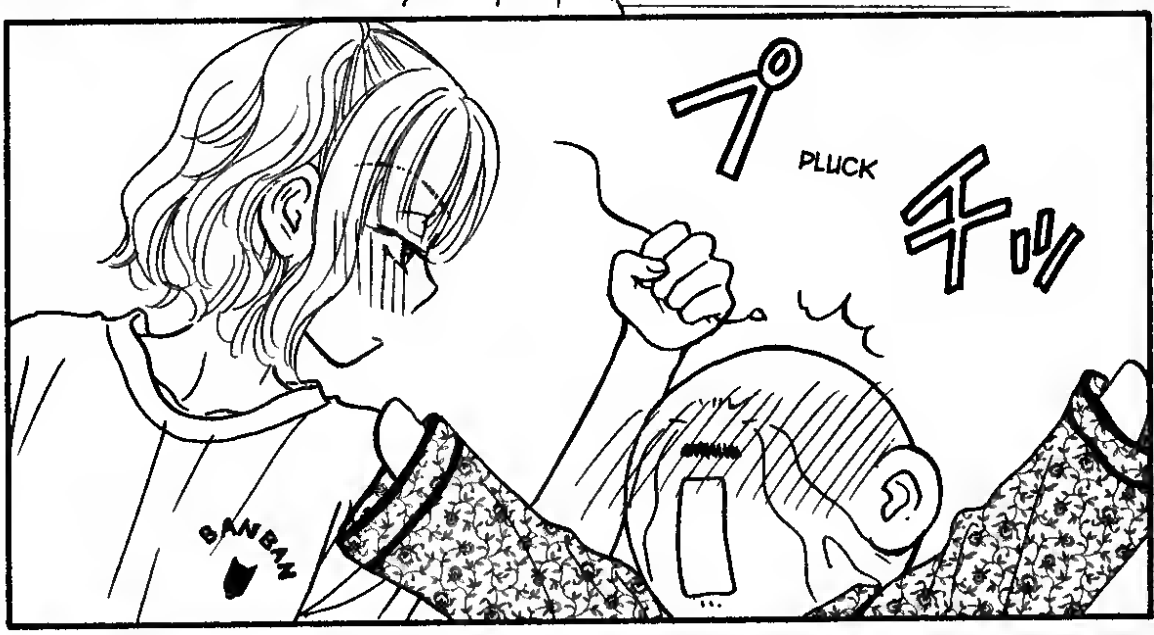
Can't I~~?
Well it's so uncomfort-able~~
Wh-What are you doing!?
Ha...!
Hana!?

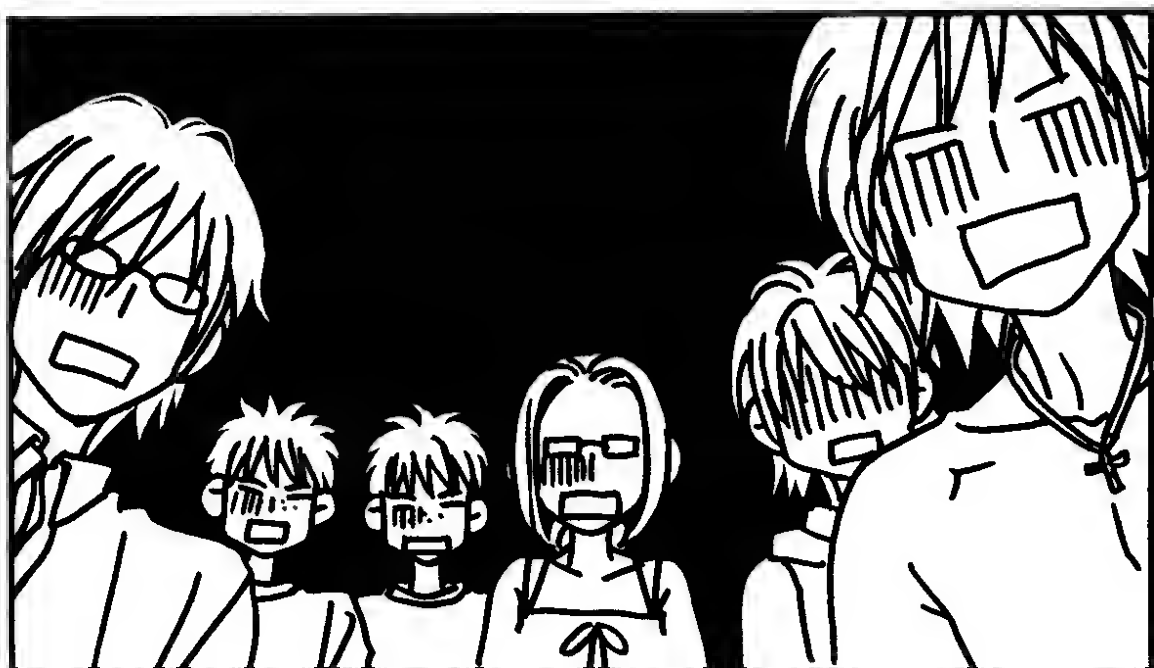
Get away from him!
It's dirty to use force when apologizing!!
So much padding...!
Izumi-sempai, undo the hooks~~
I can't breathe~~
Waaaahhh!
I've never done that!
Hey, Tamako! You paralyzed her, didn't you!?
No! Don't make me wear it~~!
Noooooo!
No subjective symptoms
Was Hana the stripping type?
You can't look!
I'm not a moron~~
M-Moron! Stop it! You can't do that!

Shut up, Izumi-sempai~~!
You're always taking your clothes off!
Don't make me sound so terrible!
Have you been drinking!?
And you've seen me completely naked~~!
EH!?
MOGOGOGOGO
モゴゴゴゴゴ
Cousin Izumi, that's so dirty!!
Shut up! That was beyond my control!!
That.

See volume 1

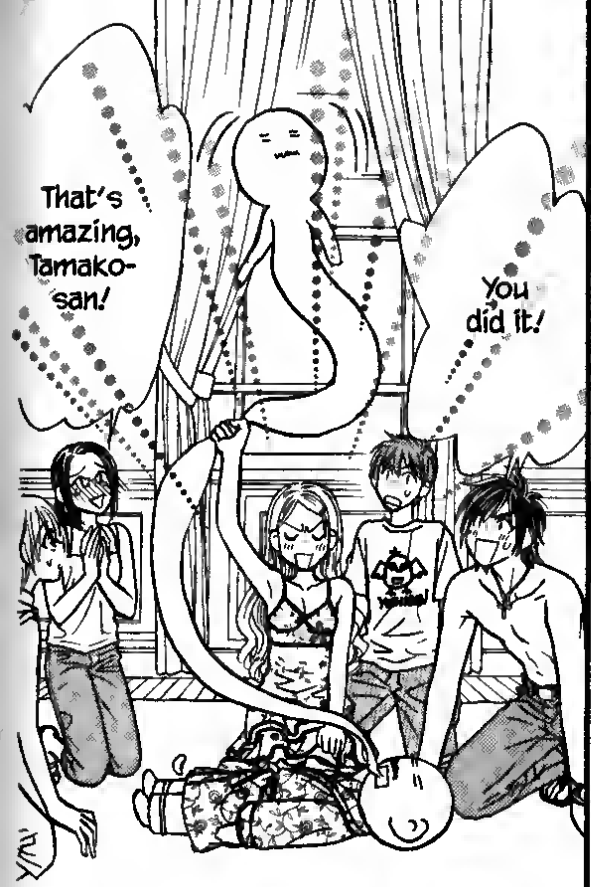

Whew.
Phew.
DAH!
Izumi, you've become a man...!

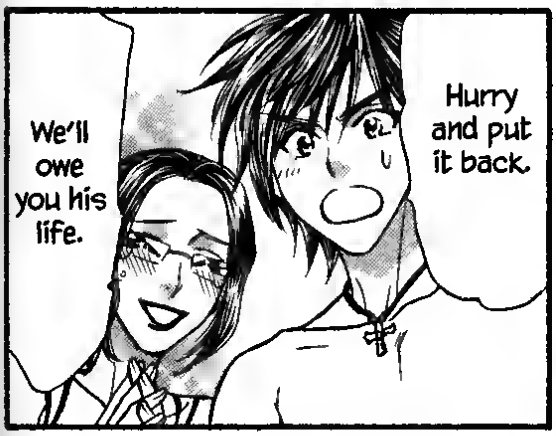

PLUCK
BAN BAN

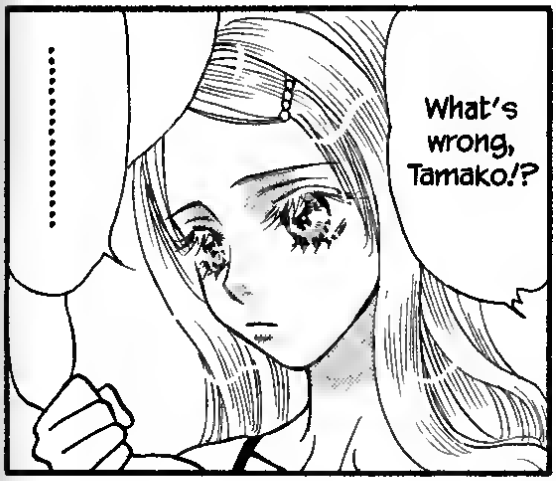


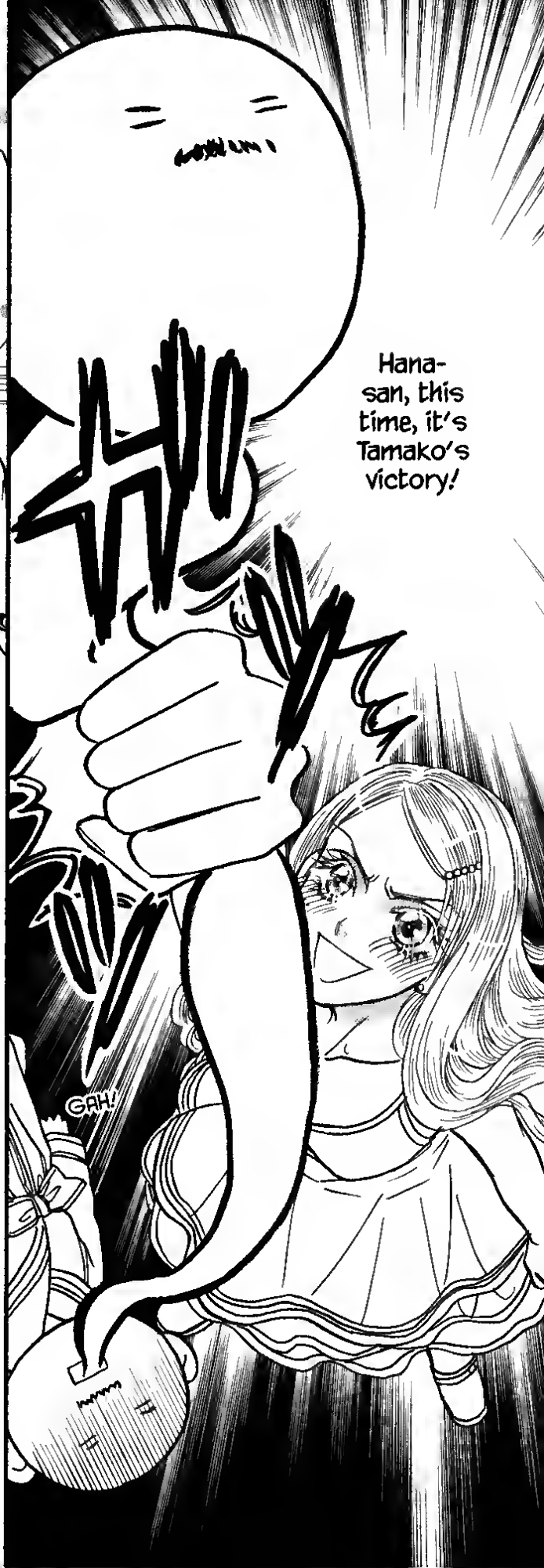
Eh heh heh.
I pulled it
out~~
♡

Dad!
BATARRRRN
D-Dear!
Leave this to Tamako!
Open your eyes, dear!
DRIFT
Aahh! His soul!!
I win!

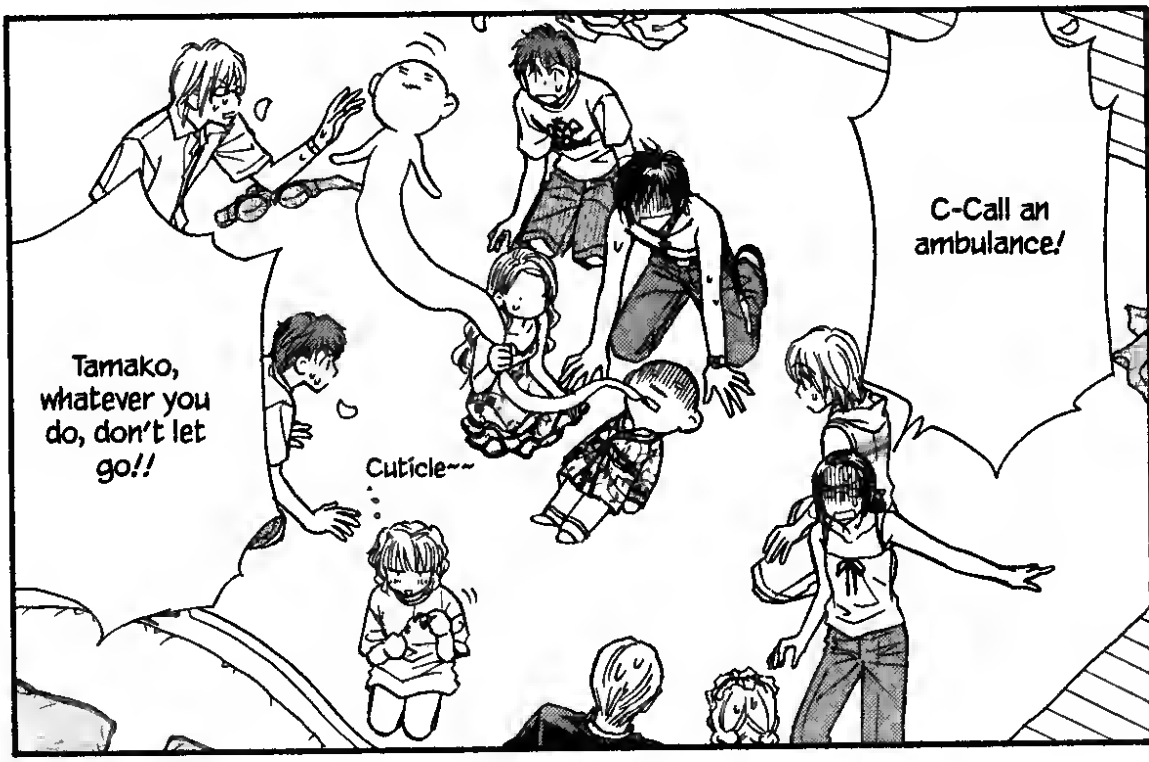

That's amazing, Tamako-san!
You did it!


We'll owe you his life.
Hurry and put it back.

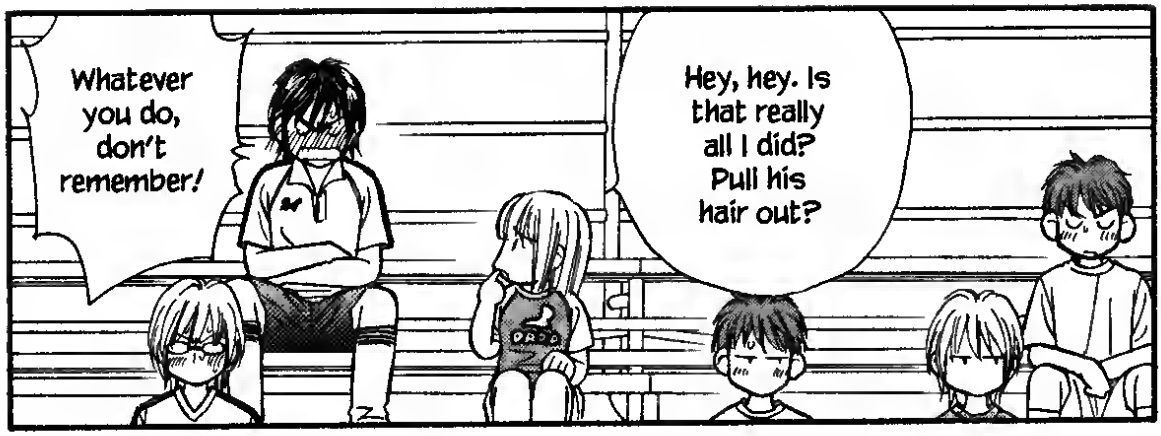

.....
What's wrong, Tamako!?


WOOLUM!
Hana-san, this time, it's Tamako's victory!
GAH!

She's useless...
How do I put it back?


Tamako, whatever you do, don't let go!!
Cuticle~~
C-Call an ambulance!

It really is a good thing they resuscitated your dad.
I'd never seen a spirit leave its body before!
I—
I'm sorry...
Never drink alcohol again!
.....
But I don't remember anything.
Isn't that good enough? If she doesn't remember.
Yeah, yeah.

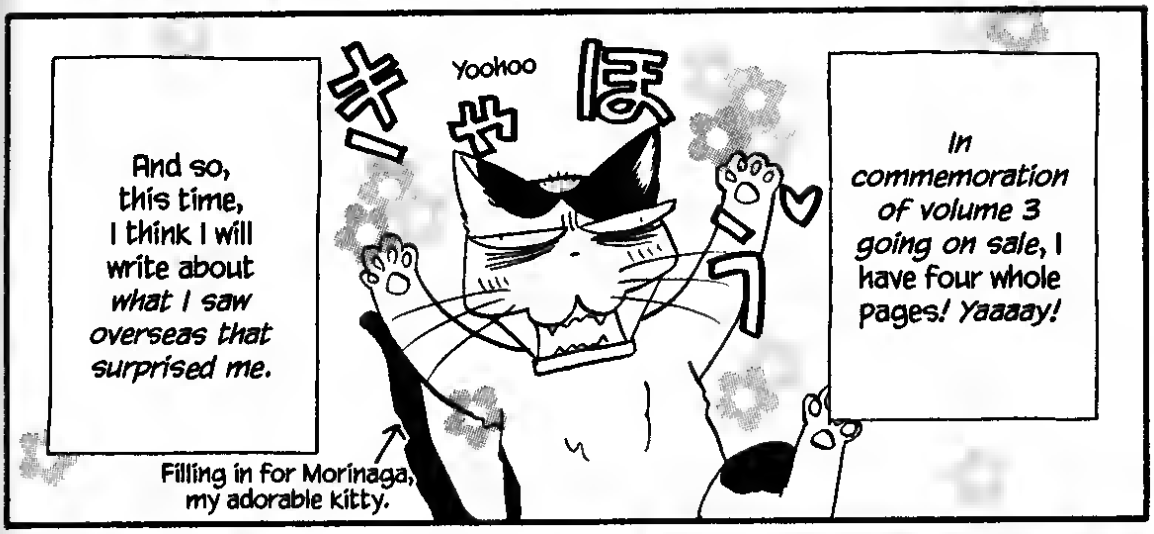

Whatever you do, don't remember!
Hey, hey. Is that really all I did? Pull his hair out?

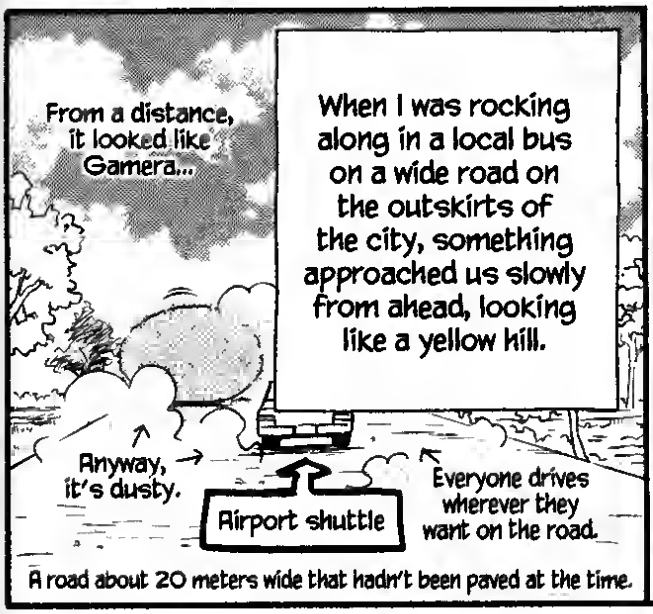
Yeah.
I'm safe.
so I can be of use when you need me.
I will go away and train
So it's all good.
And it doesn't look like Tamako will be coming back for a while.

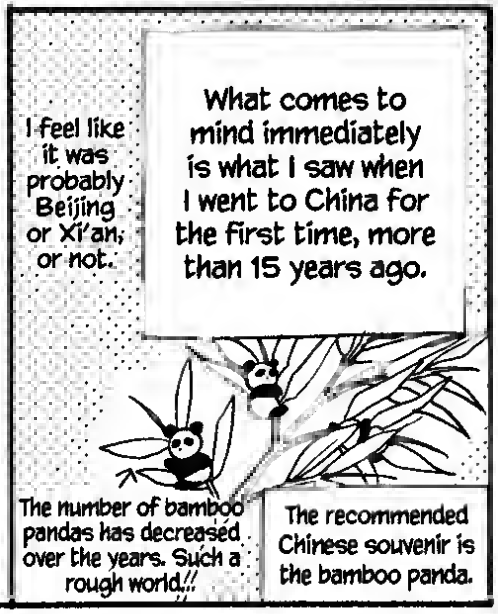
I'm sorry.
Well, I pressured you a lot, Hana.

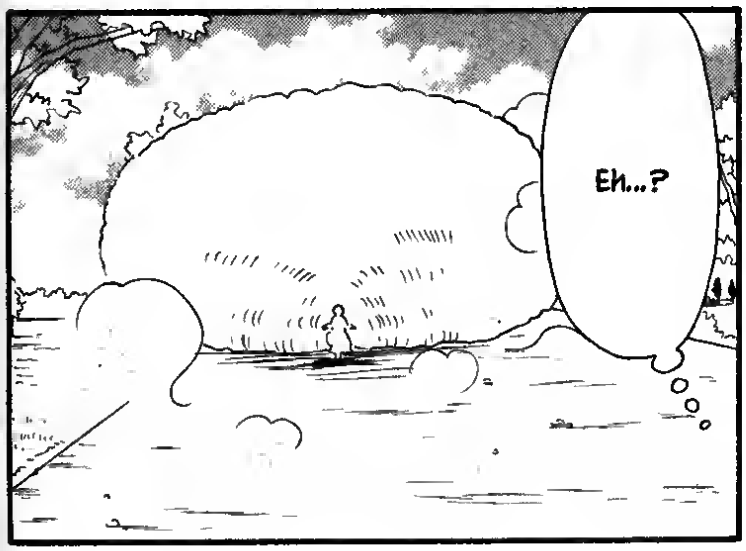
Like memories of a bad vacation...
And it was a valuable experience. Thinking about it now, I guess it was a little fun.
I kind of learned lots of stuff for free.
Yeah, well.
No!!
Then it would have been even more fun if you'd actually gotten engaged.
Ah ha ha ha ha
Cousin Izumi, Tamako is doing her best!!
Oh, my ♡
Ah! Two hairs!
The End
See you in volume 4 ♪

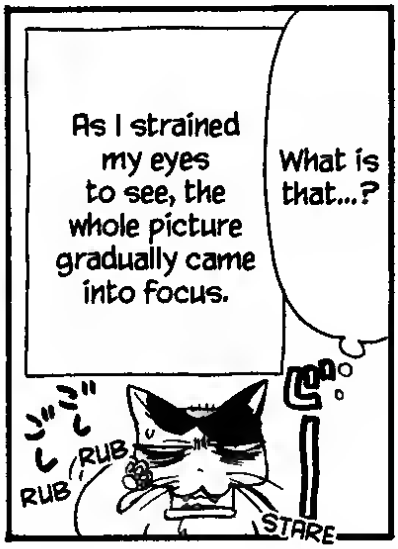
Ai Morinaga-sensei Speaks! ~ Kind of a Good Story ~

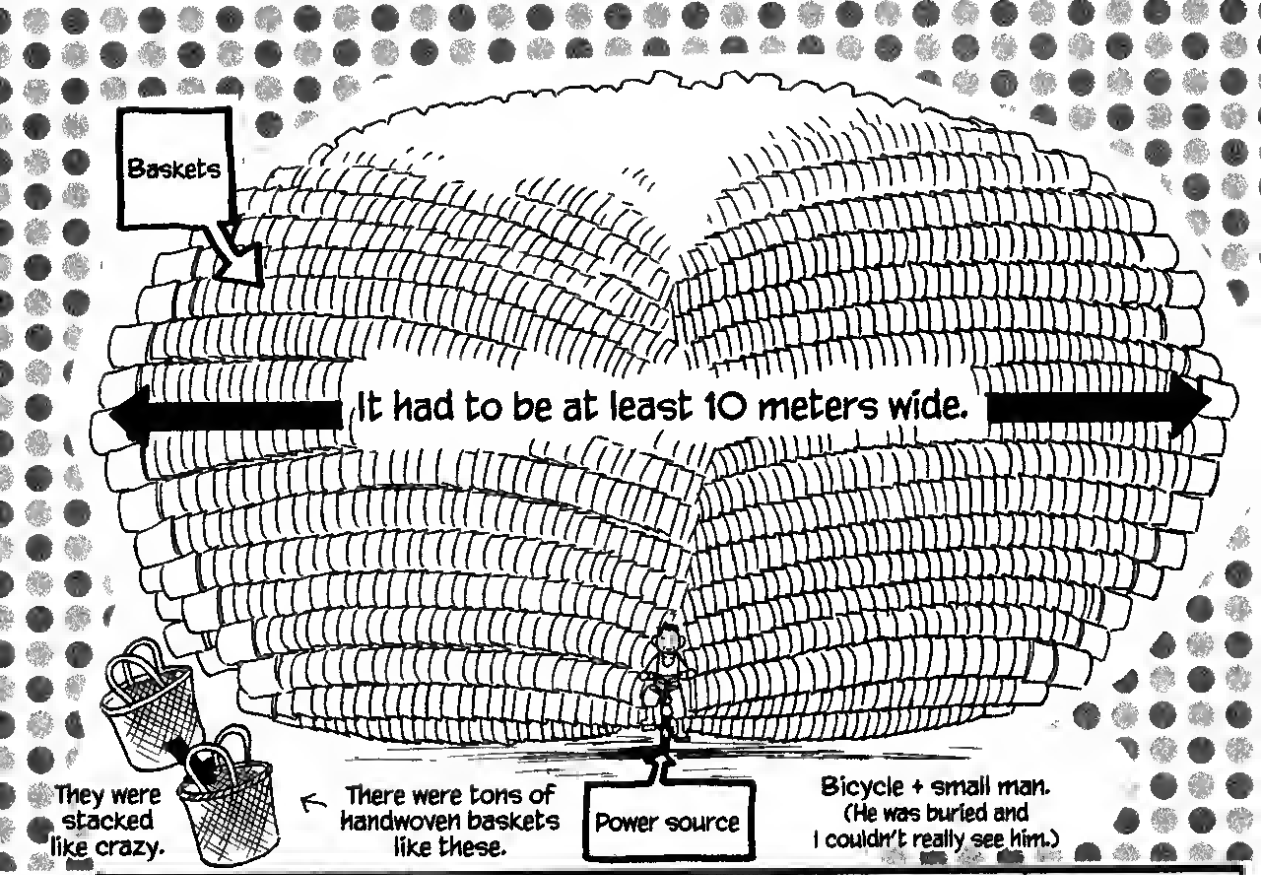

And so, this time, I think I will write about *what I saw overseas that surprised me.*
Yoohoo
In commemoration of volume 3 going on sale, I have four whole pages! *Yaaaay!*
Filling in for Morinaga, my adorable kitty.


From a distance, it looked like Gamera...
When I was rocking along in a local bus on a wide road on the outskirts of the city, something approached us slowly from ahead, looking like a yellow hill.
Anyway, it's dusty.
Airport shuttle
Everyone drives wherever they want on the road.
A road about 20 meters wide that hadn't been paved at the time.


I feel like it was probably Beijing or Xi'an, or not.
What comes to mind immediately is what I saw when I went to China for the first time, more than 15 years ago.
The number of bamboo pandas has decreased over the years. Such a rough world...!!
The recommended Chinese souvenir is the bamboo panda.

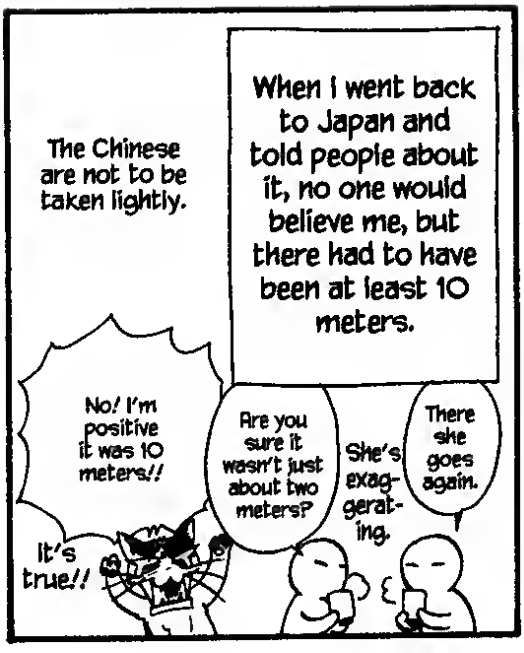


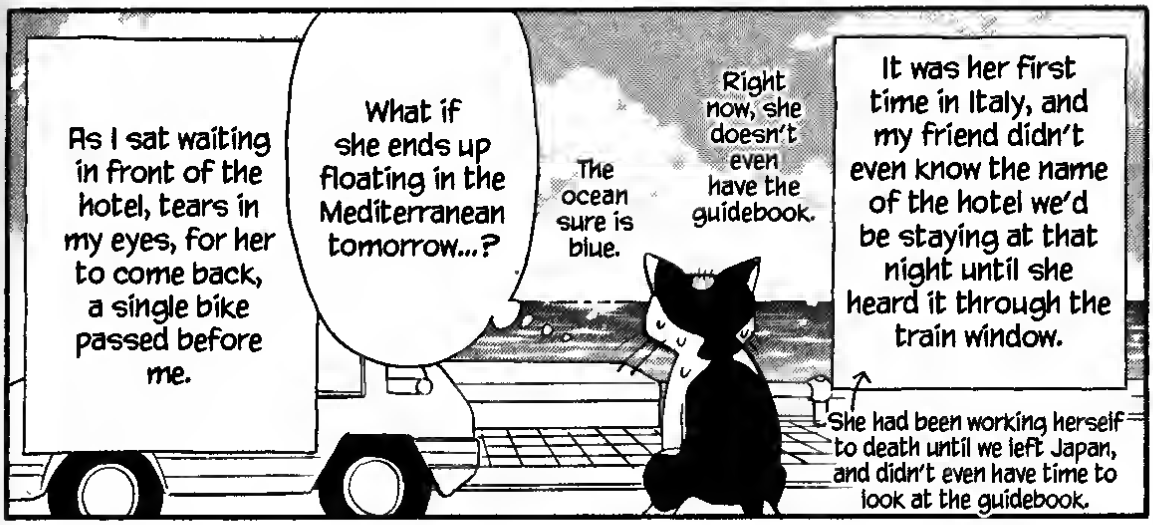


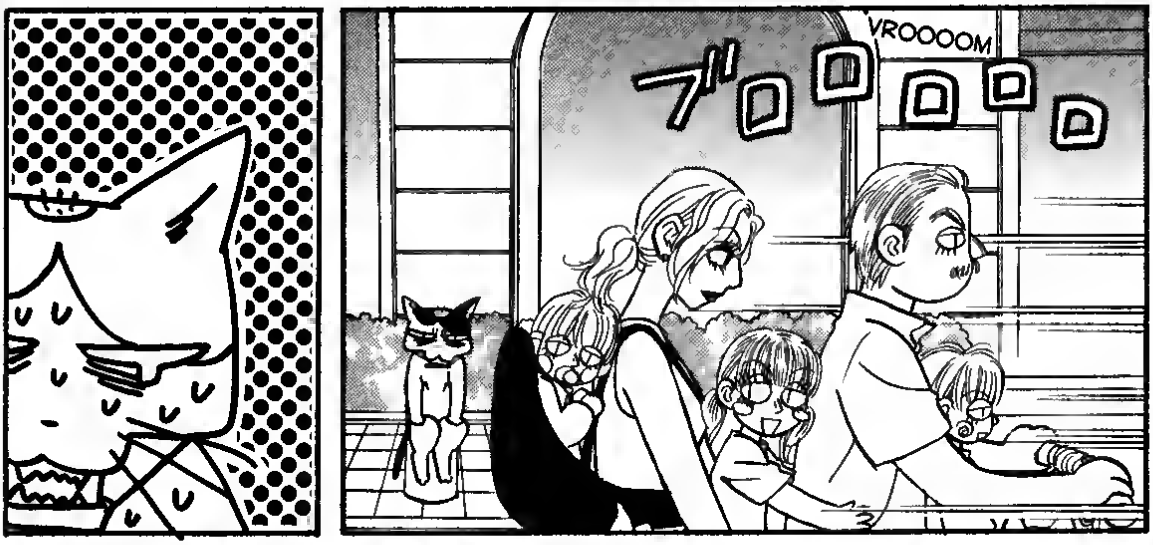

Baskets
It had to be at least 10 meters wide.
They were stacked like crazy.
There were tons of handwoven baskets like these.
Power source
Bicycle + small man. (He was buried and I couldn't really see him.)

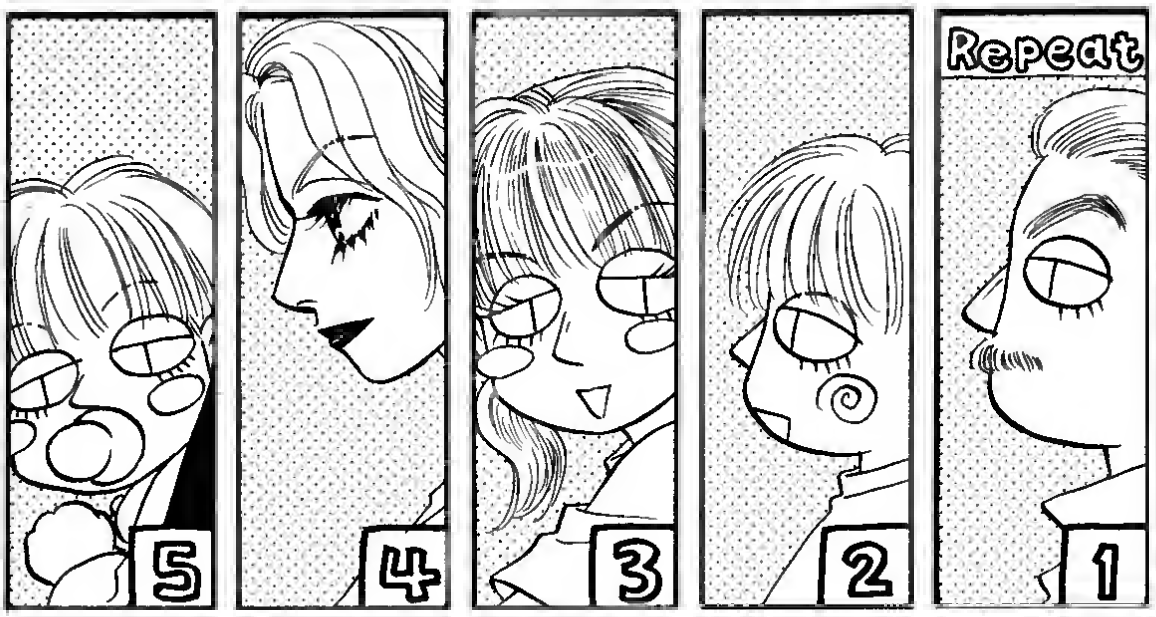
It took some time before my brain processed what my eyes were seeing.
.....

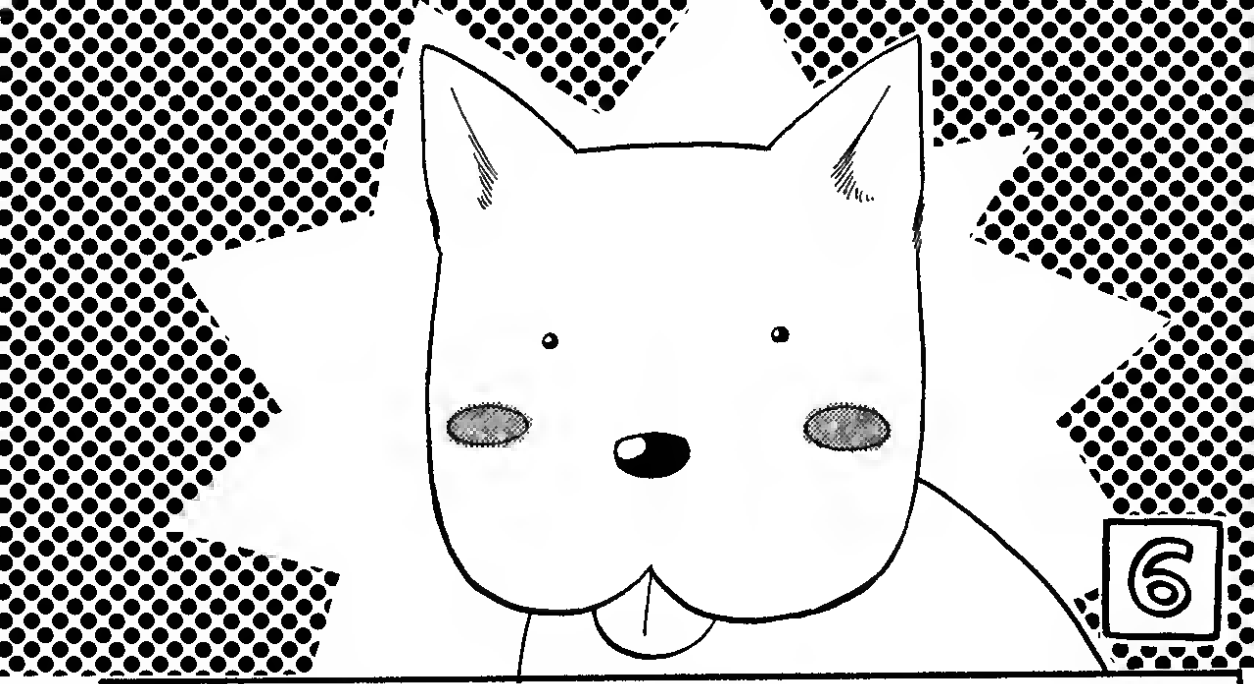
My friend and I were parted forever at Naples Station.
But I saw something more incredible in Italy.
(Express train) Direct to Sicily.
Name of the hotel.
SA
N
TA
A!
LU
CI
I'll meet you at the hotel!
Okay ♡
My friend didn't make it on the train because of me.

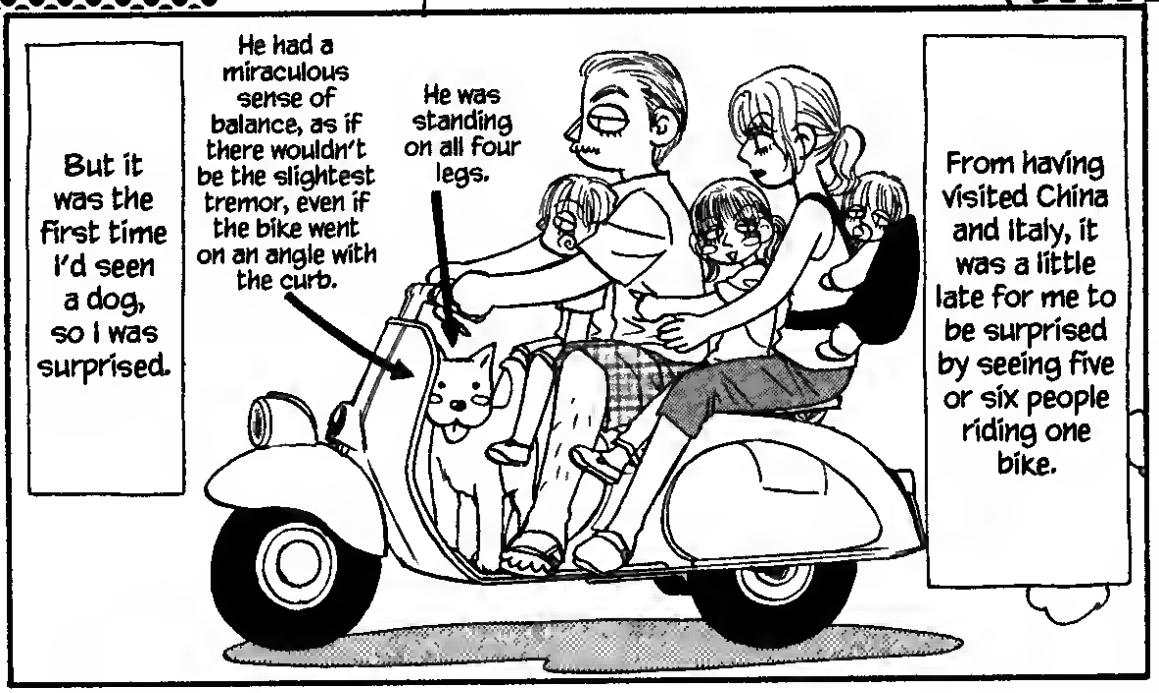

The Chinese are not to be taken lightly.
When I went back to Japan and told people about it, no one would believe me, but there had to have been at least 10 meters.
No! I'm positive it was 10 meters!!
It's true!!
Are you sure it wasn't just about two meters?
She's exaggerating.
There she goes again.

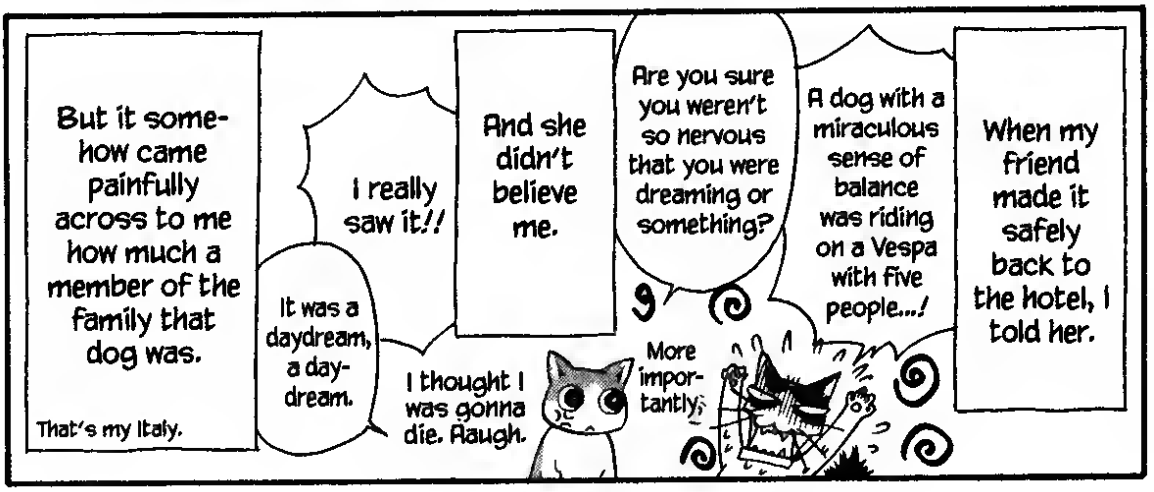

As I sat waiting in front of the hotel, tears in my eyes, for her to come back, a single bike passed before me.
What if she ends up floating in the Mediterranean tomorrow...?
The ocean sure is blue.
Right now, she doesn't even have the guidebook.
It was her first time in Italy, and my friend didn't even know the name of the hotel we'd be staying at that night until she heard it through the train window.
She had been working herself to death until we left Japan, and didn't even have time to look at the guidebook.


VROOOOM


5
4
3
2
Repeat
1


6


But it was the first time I'd seen a dog, so I was surprised.
He had a miraculous sense of balance, as if there wouldn't be the slightest tremor, even if the bike went on an angle with the curb.
He was standing on all four legs.
From having visited China and Italy, it was a little late for me to be surprised by seeing five or six people riding one bike.


But it somehow came painfully across to me how much a member of the family that dog was.
That's my Italy.
It was a daydream, a daydream.
I really saw it!!
I thought I was gonna die. Raugh.
And she didn't believe me.
Are you sure you weren't so nervous that you were dreaming or something?
More importantly,
A dog with a miraculous sense of balance was riding on a Vespa with five people...!
When my friend made it safely back to the hotel, I told her.

The End

Translation Notes

Japanese is a tricky language for most Westerners, and translation is often more art than science. For your edification and reading pleasure, here are notes on some of the places where we could have gone in a different direction in our translation of the work, or where a Japanese cultural reference is used.

Iriomote wildcat, page 6

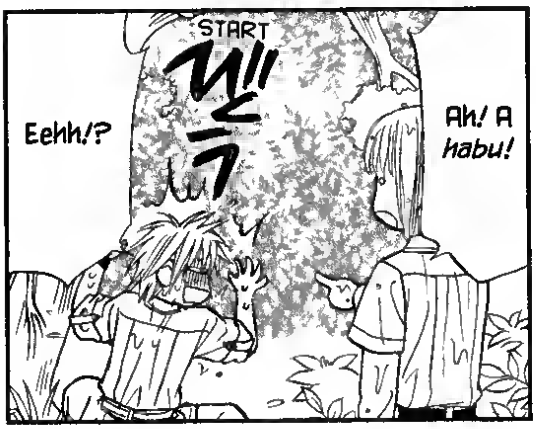
An endangered wildcat that is found only on Iriomote Island, an island in the south of Japan.

Chinsukô, page 16

A type of biscuit made mostly of lard and flour, and a specialty of Okinawa.

Whose dad are you!!!? page 18

Fathers the world over love to make bad puns, and in Japan, such puns are referred to as "dad gags." So when Takashi makes a bad, not to mention mean, pun, Hana wants to know what gives him the right to make dad jokes.



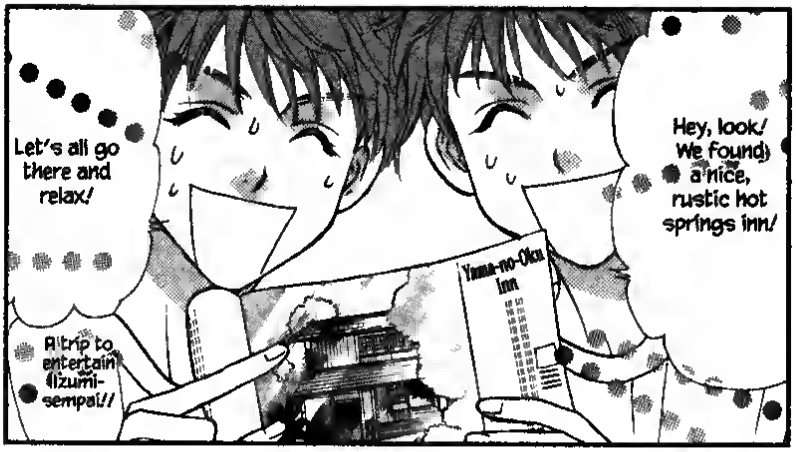
***Habu*, page 25**

Habus are pit vipers, venomous snakes found in southeast Asia.

***Rafte* and *goya champurû*, page 35**

Rafte is a pork dish, consisting of slices of pork in a sweet brown sauce. *Goya champurû* is a *champurû*, or mixed stir-fry, made with *goya*, a kind of bitter melon grown in Okinawa.

I would be in the summer home, eating rafte or goya champurû about now.
...If Izumi-sempai hadn't gone off about Iriomote wildcats,

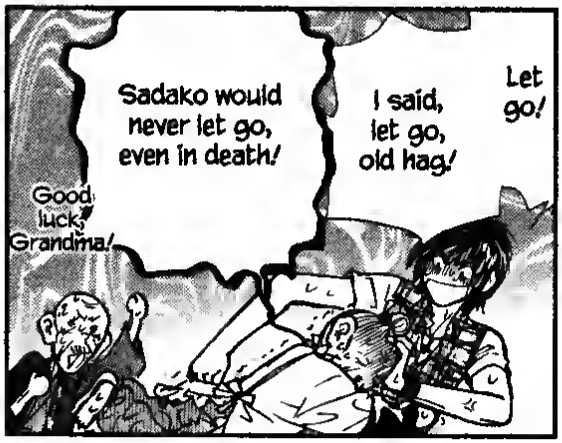


Yama-no-Oku Inn, page 46

Yama-no-oku means "deep in the mountains." It must be a very remote inn.

JARO, page 49

The Japan Advertising Review Organization (JARO) was created to protect consumers from false advertising and the like.

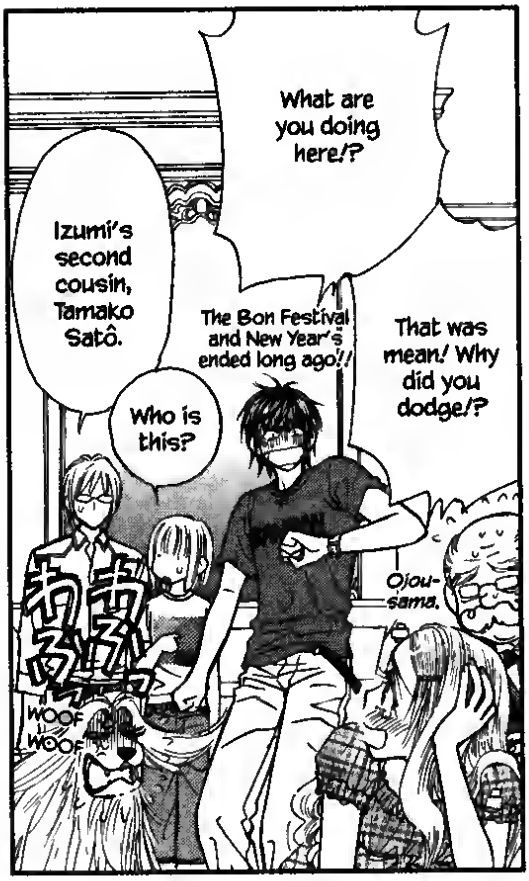


Sadako, page 52

Sadako is the name of the girl in the original Japanese version of *The Ring*.

Mino MoXta, page 86

The person Hana's mother is "not" referring to is probably Mino Monta, a well known TV personality in Japan, who not only hosts many TV shows, including the Japanese version of *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?*, but holds the record for most hours on live TV in a week.


What are you doing here!?
Izumi's second cousin, Tamako Satô.
The Bon Festival and New Year's ended long ago!!
That was mean! Why did you dodge!?
Who is this?
Ojou-sama.
WOOF
WOOF

Ojou-sama, page 95

Ojou-sama is a respectful way of addressing someone of a higher social status, but lower age, than your own, especially the daughter of a family where one works as a maid, butler, etc.

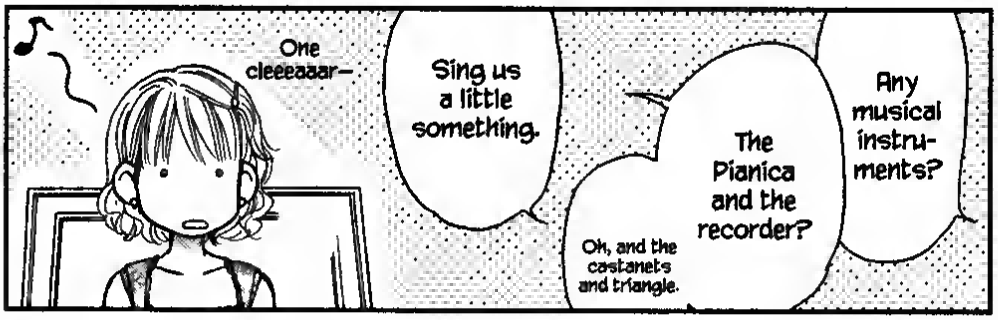
Bon Festival and New Year's, page 95

In Japan, the two big family holidays are the Bon Festival and New Year's. The Bon Festival is a Buddhist festival to honor one's ancestors.

But I couldn't come to Japan during the Bon Festival or New Year's.
Tamako Satô...?
Both of her parents are half Japanese.
And I just had to see you, Cousin Izumi.

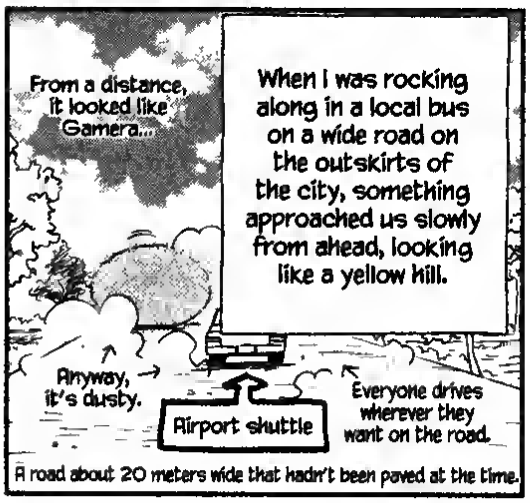
Tamako Satô...? page 96

Hana wonders why Tamako has a Japanese name, being so blonde.


One cleeeaaar—
Sing us a little something.
Any musical instruments?
The Pianica and the recorder?
Oh, and the castanets and triangle.

Pianica and recorder, page 115

In Japan, elementary school students all learn how to play the Pianica (combination piano and harmonica) and the recorder.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When I was rocking along in a local bus on a wide road on the outskirts of the city, something approached us slowly from ahead, looking like a yellow hill.
Anyway, it's dusty.
Airport shuttle
Everyone drives wherever they want on the road.
A road about 20 meters wide that hadn't been paved at the time.

Gamera, page 166

Gamera is a character from a series of Japanese giant monster movies from the 1960s. Gamera is something like Godzilla—except that he's a gigantic bipedal turtle.